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The life and the work of Austrian composer, conductor, pianist, and musical essayist Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944) were for many years largely lost to history. One factor that may well have contributed to this situation was that, being Jewish, he was among those who were persecuted and killed under the National Socialist regime during the Second World War. Only the persistent work of musicologists, mainly within the last twenty to thirty years, has been able to shed some light on the circumstances of his life. While much research has been done regarding Ullmann's life, the body of research focusing on his works is still fairly small. Ullmann's *Lieder*, in particular, have not been discussed to their full extent. The growing availability of his *Lieder* in print and on audio recordings expands the possibilities for further research.

The present study discusses Ullmann's *Sechs Lieder* Op. 17 (1937), settings of poetry by the Swiss anthroposophic poet Albert Steffen (1884-1963). First, the paper familiarizes the reader with general aspects of Ullmann's life and work, his holistic *Weltanschauung* Anthroposophy, and his musical ideals. Second, it provides an overview of his *Lieder*, including his general knowledge and assessment of the human voice. Finally, after a brief introduction to both life and work of the poet, the study provides an interpretative analysis of the Steffen-*Lieder* in terms of Ullmann's musical language and his response to the poetry.

The principal characteristic of Ullmann's musical language present in this set is the combination of traditional and contemporary musical elements. He alters familiar harmonic and melodic structures by adding elements of contemporary styles, such as dissonances, whole-tones, altered chords, and augmented chords, positioning his music between tonality and atonality. With his innate musical language, Ullmann illustrates the poetry with both sensitivity and in great detail, pointing musically to the spheres of both the spiritual world and the sensual world. In

doing so, his aim was perhaps to represent the primary tension between the darkness of earthly life and the hope for spiritual redemption in heaven as they are expressed in Steffen's poetry.

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH: VIKTOR ULLMANN'S
STEFFEN-*LIEDER* OP. 17

by
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Approved by

Committee Chair

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To my mother

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The life and the work of Austrian composer, conductor, pianist, and musical essayist Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944) were for many years largely lost to history. One factor that may well have contributed to this situation was that, being Jewish, he was among those who were persecuted and killed under the National Socialist regime during the Second World War. Not only was his life taken, but his existence was almost entirely obliterated through the destruction of his personal belongings, including letters, articles, manuscripts and works. Only the persistent work of musicologists, mainly within the last twenty to thirty years, has been able to finally shed some light on the general circumstances of Ullmann's life.¹ A collection of Ullmann-letters from the years 1917-1919, which was donated to the institution *musica reanimata* in 1998, was particularly illuminating in giving those general circumstances personal depth, providing insight into the young Ullmann's inner life, thoughts and aspirations.²

While much research has been done regarding Ullmann's life, the body of research focusing on his works is still fairly small. Ullmann's *Lieder*, in particular, have not been discussed to their full extent with only one dissertation by Wendy Anne Mullen on the *Geistliche*

¹ Ingo Schulz, *Viktor Ullmann: Leben und Werk* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2008), 9-10.

² Ingo Schultz, "Viktor Ullmann und Arnold Schönberg: Dokumente aus den Jahren 1917-1919," in *Arnold Schönbergs Wiener Kreis, Bericht zum Symposium 12.-15. September 1999*, ed. Christian Meyer (Vienna: Arnold Schönberg Center, 2000), 160-161. The institution *musica reanimata: Förderverein zur Wiederentdeckung NS-verfolgter Komponisten und ihrer Werke e.V.* was founded in Berlin, Germany, in 1990 to help rediscover composers persecuted during the Third Reich. Concerts, conferences, a book series, and a journal deliver the findings to the public. *musica reanimata*, admin. Peter Sarkar, website <http://www.musica-reanimata.de/> (accessed Jan 18, 2011).

Lieder Op. 20, and an article by Gottfried Eberle on the *Hölderlin Lieder*. Most research on Ullmann, primarily written in German, focuses on his biography, his piano solo works, and above all his Theresienstadt opera, *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (The Emperor of Atlantis). Ingo Schultz has written extensively on Ullmann, publishing several articles on aspects of Ullmann's life, his connection to Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951) and Alban Berg (1885-1835), and a collection of critiques Ullmann wrote on concerts in Theresienstadt. Most recently, he published the Ullmann biography *Viktor Ullmann: Leben und Werk* (Bärenreiter: Kassel, 2008). Additional works include another comprehensive biography by Verena Naegele, a description of the general circumstances in Theresienstadt by Hans Günther Adler in which Ullmann's activities are mentioned in several places, and a catalogue of Ullmann's works by Hans-Günter Klein. Several journal articles focus on specific works, such as the piano sonatas and the opera, *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*. In English, there are currently only three dissertations on some of Ullmann's works, as well as a biographical sketch by Max Bloch, a former student of Ullmann's.

Vocal music held an important place within Ullmann's musical output, although he wrote in almost all genres: orchestral music, solo instrumental and chamber music, vocal solo and choral music, and opera. He composed *Lieder* throughout his whole career: songs were among his earliest compositions, and he continued to write *Lieder* in Theresienstadt.³ While the early songs from the 1920s are lost, songs from the later years provide insight into his compositional goals, values and principles.

In contrast to many of his contemporaries, Ullmann never had a publisher during his lifetime. Many of his early works are therefore lost, and we only know of them through press

³Ingo Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 260-262.

reports of the time.⁴ In the mid 1930s however, he began publishing some of his own works, and thanks to this and to several friends keeping his music while he was in Theresienstadt and later in Auschwitz, many of his later works survived.⁵

To date, a substantial body of Ullmann's *Lieder* has been found and preserved. In 2004, Schott published a complete volume of Ullmann's songs, including an extensive foreword with a brief historical setting of the individual songs and cycles, and editorial notes.⁶ Several recordings of Ullmann's *Lieder* include *Lieder* for voice and piano with Christine Schäfer (soprano), Axel Bauni (piano), Yaron Windmüller (baritone), and Liat Himmelheber (mezzo-soprano).⁷ Mitsuko Shirai (soprano), Elisabeth Verhoeven (mezzo-soprano), and Hartmut Höll (piano), also recorded a selection of Ullmann's *Lieder* for voice and piano.⁸ Petr Matuszek (baritone), Aleš Kaňka (piano), Pavel Eret (violin), Libor Kaňka (viola), and Vladan Koči (violoncello) included additionally some *Lieder* for voice and string trio.⁹ Other recordings include Ullmann's *Lieder* in collections of Holocaust composers. In spite of the favorable situation regarding general research and availability of scores and recordings, Ullmann remains relatively unknown. His *Lieder* are

⁴ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 88.

⁵ Hans-Günter Klein, ed. *Viktor Ullmann-Materialien*, Verdrängte Musik, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Von Bockel, 1995), 11-13.

⁶ Viktor Ullmann, *Complete Songs for Voice and Piano* (Mainz: Schott, 2004).

⁷ Viktor Ullmann, *Lieder*, Christiane Schäfer, Liat Himmelheber, Yaron Windmüller, and Axel Bauni (Orfeo, 1995).

⁸ Viktor Ullmann, *Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke, Hölderlin Gesänge, Liebeslieder*, Mitsuko Shirai, Elisabeth Verhoeven, and Hartmut Höll (Capriccio, 2002).

⁹ Viktor Ullmann, *Songs*, Petr Matuszek, Aleš Kaňka, Pavel Eret, Libor Kaňka, and Vladan Koči (Supraphone, 1997).

not yet performed with any degree of frequency on the concert stage, thus providing a rich opportunity for research.

Ullmann, in addition to composition, was also active as a writer of articles for several journals of his time, such as *Der Auftakt*, *Anbruch*, and *Das Goetheanum*.¹⁰ His articles lay out his ideas on various musical topics, such as composers, musical life at the time, and vocal music. As evident from his writings, Ullmann attempted to unite elements from different eras in his musical language, rather than being a disciple of one particular school of composition. His aim as a composer was to find his own path between music from the past and music from the present.

In the present study, I discuss Ullmann's *Sechs Lieder* Op. 17 (1937), settings of poetry by the Swiss anthroposophic poet Albert Steffen (1884-1963). The principal characteristic of Ullmann's musical language present in this set is the combination of traditional and contemporary musical elements. He repeatedly alters familiar harmonic and melodic structures by adding elements of contemporary styles, such as dissonances, whole-tones, altered chords, and augmented chords, positioning his music between tonality and atonality. Ullmann's innate musical language illustrates the poetry with both sensitivity and in great detail, pointing musically to the spheres of both the spiritual world and the sensual world. Thus, his aim was perhaps to represent the primary tension between the darkness of earthly life and the hope for spiritual redemption in heaven as they are expressed in Steffen's poetry.

This paper consists of five chapters. After the introductory first chapter, the second chapter is divided into three sections, familiarizing the reader with general aspects of Ullmann's life and work. The first section focuses on the major periods of his life, intertwined with his musical development as composer. The second section describes Ullmann's path to

¹⁰ See the list of Ullmann's articles in the bibliography section of this paper.

Anthroposophy, a holistic, Christian-based *Weltanschauung* (world view) which, following the teachings of the Austrian Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), aims at a more insightful understanding of the world. The third section discusses Ullmann's musical ideals, as shaped by his own musical experiences, and as expressed in his literary writings and music.

The third chapter gives an overview of Ullmann's *Lieder*, including poets, topics and major musical characteristics. His poetry selections include old and new, German and foreign, familiar and unfamiliar poets, thereby demonstrating his somewhat eclectic taste and interest. The second section of this chapter addresses Ullmann's general knowledge and assessment of the human voice in terms of both its technical and musical capabilities.

The fourth chapter is an examination of the Steffen-*Lieder*. A biographical introduction to the poet precedes a short interpretation of his poems and the discussion of the songs. The interpretative analysis makes use of various techniques as deemed appropriate and necessary to obtain an in-depth understanding of the structure and character of the music and its relationship to the text.

With the exception of the third song, the Steffen-*Lieder* have a quiet character with both music and poetry avoiding extremes and the vocal and piano parts often very close in range if not doubled. Poetic struggles remain introverted in the music, emanating an overall sense of calmness and peacefulness, reflecting the anthroposophical ideal of the reassurance of salvation in death.

The sixth and final chapter summarizes the findings. Ullmann's Steffen-*Lieder* show principal characteristics of his musical language, as well as his sensitive response to the anthroposophic poetry. In general, he used more traditional elements to illustrate the familiar, such as the earthly life with its burdens and sufferings. In contrast, Ullmann utilized more contemporary elements to depict the unfamiliar, such as the elements of death, reincarnation, and the afterlife. Hence, Ullmann musically demonstrates the connection and intertwinement of earth

and heaven, life and death, familiar and unfamiliar, all of which are present in Steffen's anthroposophical poetry.

CHAPTER II

VIKTOR ULLMANN

Biography

Viktor Ullmann was born in 1898 in Teschen, a small city in the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the First World War, divided since between the Czech Republic and Poland. His father, Maximilian Georg Ullmann (1861-1938), was a soldier; his mother, Malwine Marie Ullmann (born Bilitzer, 1873-1940), belonged to the Vienna high bourgeoisie. Ullmann was a pupil in the *Volksschule* (1904-1908) and of the *Albrecht-Gymnasium* (1908-1909) in Teschen until he moved with his mother to Vienna, where he became a student at the *Rasumofsky-Gymnasium*.¹¹ He graduated from there in 1916 with a *Kriegsabitur*, the certification of completion of requirements without examination, in order to enlist in the army for active service. Ullmann was awarded a *Tapferkeitsmedaille* (medal for courage) for his service during the war and a promotion to Second Lieutenant in 1918.¹² After the war he moved to Prague, which was his home from 1919-1942 with the exception of his attempts to find work in Aussig, Zurich and Stuttgart.

Throughout his life, Ullmann searched for spiritual fulfillment. Originally baptized Catholic, he later converted to Protestantism and was also interested in Eastern religions and

¹¹ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 13-22; Ingo Schultz, "Wege und Irrwege der Ullmann-Forschung", in *Viktor Ullmann: Die Referate anlässlich des 50. Todestages, 14.-16. Oktober 1994 in Dornach, und ergänzende Studien*, ed. Hans-Günter Klein (Hamburg: Von Bockel, 1996), 14.

¹² Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 37.

Anthroposophy, which will be discussed in more detail later in this study. However, both his parents were originally Jewish,¹³ a fact which ultimately resulted in profound consequences once the National Socialists came to power in Europe. In 1942, Ullmann was deported to the National Socialist concentration camp Theresienstadt, and he was killed in Auschwitz in 1944.

Ullmann's early musical education is only sparsely documented, but as Schultz and others have established, among his first musical experiences were the music of the Catholic Church and military music, Teschen being a garrison city. From 1914 until 1916, he received instruction in music theory from Dr. Josef Polnauer (1888-1969) and, particularly after the First World War, in piano with Eduard Steuermann (1892-1964), both students of Schönberg.¹⁴ After the war, Ullmann participated in Schönberg's composition seminar near Vienna, studying counterpoint and harmony with him (September 1918 - April 1919).¹⁵ This experience strengthened his wish to pursue music as a career and led to his resignation from law studies he had begun at the University of Vienna in order to please his father. After his move to Prague, Ullmann studied composition privately with Heinrich Jalowetz (1882-1946), and in 1935 began studies in quarter-tone music with Alois Hába (1893-1973) at the conservatory in Prague.¹⁶ In general however, Ullmann was a musical autodidact, learning by self-study from the repertoire of his past and present.¹⁷

¹³ Both Ullmann's parents came from Jewish families, but converted to Catholicism together in 1896, in order to improve Maximilian's career chances, and to fit better into society. Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 9-10.

¹⁴ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 26.

¹⁵ Ibid., 75; Naegele additionally lists form, instrumentation, and analysis, in: Verena Naegele, *Viktor Ullmann: Komponieren in Verlorener Zeit* (Köln: Dittrich, 2002), 99.

¹⁶ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 157.

¹⁷ Ibid., 70.

As a young pupil, Ullmann experienced the rich cultural and musical scene of Vienna at the turn of the century with all the changes and developments in music at the time. The Philharmonic, the *Hofoper*, the *Musikverein* and the *Konzerthaus*, to name only a few, provided many opportunities to hear standard repertoire as well as new compositions by composers such as Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), Richard Strauss (1864-1949) and Schönberg.

While in preparation for his military service, and also while at the front, Ullmann showed continued interest in the cultural and particularly the musical scene of Vienna. He studied works by Schönberg, Mahler and Strauss, as well as Johann Sebastian Bach (1684-1750), Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) and Claude Debussy (1862-1918).

Ullmann also kept his knowledge of poetry current through his exposure to contemporary literary journals, particularly the expressionist journal, *Die Fackel* (The Torch). Editor Karl Kraus (1874-1936) published his own works, critiquing language, society, and war, as well as works by other authors of similar ideology. In addition to Kraus' writings, some of the authors Ullmann read in *Die Fackel* included Else Lasker-Schüler (1869-1945) and Georg Trakl (1887-1914), who also belonged to the literary movement of Expressionism.¹⁸ Ullmann's early musical settings of their poems are today, unfortunately, all assumed lost.

After the war and after completing several months of Schönberg's seminars, Ullmann moved to Prague in May 1919. In the following year, he became first choir director, coach and later also *Kapellmeister* at the Prager *Neudeutsches Theater* under Alexander Zemlinsky (1871-1942). One of his first tasks at the theater was the preparation of the chorus for a performance of Schönberg's *Gurrelieder*, which he fulfilled with much acclaim.¹⁹

¹⁸ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 46.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

In addition to his work at the theater, Ullmann wrote articles for the new music journal *Der Auftakt* (The Upbeat) on various music historical and music sociological issues, and he composed.²⁰ Among his earliest works are his *Sieben Lieder mit Klavier* (1923), the first string quartet (1923), his *Symphonische Phantasie* (1924) and the first version of his *Variationen und Doppelfuge über ein kleines Klavierstück von Schönberg* (1925), all of which received successful premieres in Prague and helped Ullmann to establish himself as a composer.²¹

In the summer of 1927, when Zemlinsky left Prague following an invitation to the *Kroll-Oper* in Berlin, Ullmann accepted the position of musical director at the opera in Aussig, on the border between Czechoslovakia and Germany.²² In his first leading position he was responsible for a complete opera season from planning stages to performances. In spite of his success in Aussig, documented in several press reports, he resigned after only one season to return to Prague, perhaps because he wanted to shift his work balance from conducting to composition.²³

Now without formal employment, Ullmann combined composing, teaching, accompanying and writing to provide for himself and his wife. In fact, his theoretical presentations of various musical matters won great acclaim and remained one of his main occupations into the Theresienstadt years. Increasing numbers of performances of his works, particularly the performance of the second version of his *Schönberg-Variationen* at the *Internationale Tage Neuer Musik* (World New Music Days) in Geneva in 1929, helped to build

²⁰ *Der Auftakt*, edited by Erich Steinhard (1886-1941: date of last deportation to the concentration camp of Łódź, date of death unknown), published detailed commentary and observations regarding the musical developments in Prague and the Czechoslovakian Republic between the two World Wars; Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 82, 240.

²¹ Ibid., 102.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 106.

Ullmann's reputation as composer.²⁴ However, still without a publisher and without a reliable income, Ullmann moved to Zurich in the summer of 1929 to become *Kapellmeister* at the *Schauspielhaus* (1929-1931) in an attempt to find a financially more consistent position. However, his work with the stage band often required arrangements and the composition of incidental music for the individual theatrical pieces, and it did not prove satisfactory long term. He moved back to Prague in the summer of 1931.

While in Zurich, Ullmann came in direct contact with Anthroposophy, a *Weltanschauung* which became very important for him. He became a member of the Anthroposophical Society in the summer of 1931, shortly after his return to Prague. His interest and engagement for anthroposophical ideals went so far that, in lieu of a formal musical break-through, he moved to Stuttgart as the owner of an anthroposophical bookstore. However, with little to no experience in bookkeeping and accounting, and unaware of the disastrous financial situation of the bookstore at the time of purchase, the attempt proved catastrophic for Ullmann. In the summer of 1933, after losing all his financial assets, he fled back to Prague, which then remained his home until his deportation to Theresienstadt.

Struggling once again to find a reliable position,²⁵ he entered a particularly creative period as a composer with many new works and their performances, public presentations (also broadcast on radio), and articles in various newspapers and journals. Twice, he received the *Emil-Hertzka-Preis* (Emil-Hertzka-award): 1934 for the third version of his *Schönberg- Variationen*,

²⁴ Ibid., 108-110.

²⁵ In addition to his earlier difficulties, Ullmann's choice of Austrian citizenship in 1921 proved disadvantageous when, as a foreigner, he faced even more difficulties in his search for employment. In spite of his many attempts, the Czech ministries refused to grant him Czech citizenship. Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 137- 138, 167.

and 1936 for his opera *Der Sturz des Antichrist* (The Fall of the Antichrist), based on a drama by Steffen.

In the summer of 1937 however, Ullmann suffered a severe physical and mental breakdown requiring psychiatric treatment. After the third, partially successful clinical attempt of treatment, Ullmann declared himself fully recovered in May 1938. During this time, Ullmann wrote a diary in verse titled *Ein fremder Passagier* ((The Foreign Traveler), in which he frequently used specific anthroposophical symbolism, perhaps helping him to deal with personal issues at the time.²⁶

Although he had already begun to publish his works himself in 1936, it was Ullmann's inheritance after the death of his father in 1938 that allowed him financially to continue to do so.²⁷ He was very selective and self-critical while choosing the pieces to be published, deciding against many of his earlier works.²⁸

Due to the political developments in Europe, particularly the beginning of the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939, life became more and more difficult for Ullmann, especially in light of the fact that he was Jewish. His already limited opportunities to present his works to the public were even further restricted until they came to a complete halt by the end of 1941.²⁹ Finally, all attempts to immigrate having failed, he was deported to the concentration

²⁶ Ibid., 170. Some uncertainty exists regarding the exact time of Ullmann's writing of *Der Fremde Passagier*: Vlasta Benetková assumes with the years 1933-1936 an earlier date than Schultz; Vlasta Benetková, "Viktor Ullmanns 'Tagebuch', sein Ort im Leben und Werk des Komponisten", in Klein, *Materialien*, 98.

²⁷ Ibid., 11.

²⁸ Max Bloch, "Viktor Ullmann: a Brief Biography and Appreciation", in *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute*, III, no. 2, 161.

²⁹ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 180-181.

camp Theresienstadt in the fall of 1942. Before his deportation, he left all his manuscripts and published works with his former student Alexander Waulin (1894-1976).³⁰

In Theresienstadt, Ullmann was active for the so-called *Freizeitgestaltung* (administration of free-time activities) in both the studio for contemporary music and the collegium musicum, as well as by organizing concerts and presentations on art, music and culture.³¹ He himself stated that his compositional work was advanced rather than inhibited in Theresienstadt,³² possibly because of the dramatic change in the nature of day-to-day issues. He composed songs, chamber music, solo piano music, choral works, and the opera, *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*. Before his deportation to Auschwitz in October 1944, Ullmann entrusted his works written in Theresienstadt to the librarian of the concentration camp, Emil Utitz (1883-1956),³³ therefore securing parts of his musical legacy. He was murdered in the gas chamber in Auschwitz upon his arrival.

³⁰ Naegele, *Ullmann*, 320.

³¹ Within the self-administration of the camp at Theresienstadt, the department of *Freizeitgestaltung* was in contact with the Jewish Cultural Organization in Prague and responsible for the development of a cultural scene in the camp. While music was at first forbidden in Theresienstadt, the department became official in 1943, consisting of several sub-departments, such as a library, rehearsal planning, opera, and instrumental music. The *Freizeitgestaltung* participated in the “beautification” project in 1943-1944, in order to prepare for a visit of the International Red Cross, turning the camp into an example ghetto.

³² Viktor Ullmann, “Goethe und Ghetto”, in *26 Kritiken über musikalische Veranstaltungen in Theresienstadt*, ed. Ingo Schultz, *Verdrängte Musik*, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Von Bockel, 1993), 93.

³³ Klein, *Materialien*, 13. Ullmann intended his manuscripts and reviews to be given to Hans Günther Adler, poet, friend, and also prisoner in Theresienstadt, in case Adler should survive. For unknown reasons, Adler, who did indeed survive, received the manuscripts through Utitz, but made them publicly accessible through a donation to the Goetheanum in Dornach only in 1987. Naegele, *Ullmann*, 438-439.

Ullmann and Anthroposophy

The term *Anthroposophy* is derived from the Greek *άνθρωπος* (human) and *σοφία* (wisdom) and means literally “wisdom of the human being”. It is a *Weltanschauung* based on the teachings by the Austrian Rudolf Steiner who had spread his ideas in seminars and presentations all over Europe beginning in the first decade of the 20th century. First a member of the Theosophical Society (since 1902), Steiner became a founding member of the Anthroposophical Society in 1913. The center of the Anthroposophical Society, the *Goetheanum*, which Ullmann visited in 1929 (see above), is located in Dornach near Basel in Switzerland. In 1919, Steiner founded the first *Waldorf Schule* in Stuttgart, Germany, an anthroposophical school leading from kindergarten to high school graduation. In 1924, one year before his death, he also founded the *Freie Hochschule für Geisteswissenschaften* (Free School for Spiritual Science) in Dornach. He considered anthroposophical ideas relevant to all aspects of life such as pedagogy, arts, movement, and even farming. To date, the *Goetheanum* provides presentations and conferences, artistic performances, and a medical clinic in order to reflect Steiner’s holistic approach. Without being a major philosophical movement, the Anthroposophical Society has spread all over the world with numerous local branches of the society and Waldorf schools.

The following explanations of Anthroposophy and the primary foundations of Steiner’s ideas largely follow Johannes Hemleben’s interpretations in his book *Rudolf Steiner: mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (1963).³⁴ Additional sources are cited separately. The aim of these explanations is to provide a basic understanding of Anthroposophy, as it is necessary in order to appreciate Ullmann’s interest in it and to guide the reader in the interpretation of the

³⁴ Johannes Hemleben, *Rudolf Steiner: mit Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1963).

poems by Albert Steffen. They do not claim to present a complete in-depth discussion of the *Weltanschauung*.

According to Hemleben, three areas of thought dominate Steiner's writings: the achievement of the freedom of will, the connection of Man's present with his past and future through reincarnation, and the firm belief in Jesus of Nazareth, particularly the Golgotha experience.

In his 1894 *Philosophie der Freiheit* (Philosophy of Freedom), he aims to find a solution to his own struggles to connect experiences in the inner, super-sensual world and the outer, sensual world of human perception.³⁵ He claims that human beings can reach a scientific knowledge of both the sensual and super-sensual worlds through perception and non-sensual thinking.³⁶ Steiner's reality consisted of both the visible, outer world and the invisible, inner world: the outer world becoming real through objective perception and reflection, the inner world being real in itself and more than an observation of or a subjective response to reality.³⁷ In order to gain more sensitive perception, he aimed to connect experiences in the super-sensual world and the material world of human perception. In order to create more insight and knowledge, perception must expand in all areas of life. Non-sensual thinking brings with it a moral aspect and leads ultimately to the ability to determine actions by one's own, free will rather than being dependent on outside influences. In Steiner's words: "Ein freies Wesen ist dasjenige, welches wollen kann, was es selbst für richtig hält."³⁸ (A free being is that, which is capable of wanting

³⁵ Rudolf Steiner, *A Theory of Knowledge: Implicit in Goethe's World Conception*, transl. Olin D. Wannamaker (New York: The Anthroposophic Press, 1968), ix.

³⁶ Hemleben, *Steiner*, 66.

³⁷ Steiner, *Theory of Knowledge*, ix; Hemleben, *Steiner*, 16.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

what itself deems right.) Steiner believed that the nature of the human being was spiritual, and hence had spiritual needs. He aimed to reconnect the human spirit with the spiritual world where all-encompassing perception and consciousness take priority over being. Steiner characterized Anthroposophy as “a path that would lead the spirit in the human being to the spirit in the universe”.³⁹

Hemleben suggests that a second important thought of Steiner’s focuses on the union of body, soul and spirit. His *Theosophie* (Theosophy) from 1904 explains his idea of reincarnation in particular.⁴⁰ Man, according to Steiner, lives in the present, but is connected through his fate (karma) with his past and future. His fate is determined by his actions and behavior in life.

In *Wie erlangt man Erkenntnisse der höheren Welten?* (*How to gain Insight of Superior Worlds*, 1904-1909), Steiner brings anthroposophical ideas together by emphasizing a direct impact of anthroposophical thought on the soul in this world and simultaneously aiming at an improvement of man’s karma. Hemleben explains Steiner’s belief that everyone has the abilities to gain knowledge into superior worlds. Steiner promotes reverence, adoration and humbleness towards truth and knowledge as the beginning and basis of the path to knowledge and inner growth. Self-control, self-education and meditation are some of the practical measures of the anthroposophical path. He wished to open Anthroposophy to people from different social, religious and philosophical backgrounds.

Finally, the firm foundation of Steiner’s thinking was his assurance that Jesus Christ is the center of the history of humankind and the world, or, as Gilbert Childs put it: “The mission of

³⁹ Henry Barnes, *A Life for the Spirit: Rudolf Steiner in the Crosscurrents of Our Time* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1997), 4.

⁴⁰ Hemleben, *Steiner*, 93.

Christ to the earth was an event unique in cosmic and human history.”⁴¹ Steiner connected the eternal component of the spirit, stated in his *Theosophie*, to the eternal entity of Christ, believing that the superior *Sonnenwesen* (Sun-Being) worshipped by pre-Christian religions such as those of Ancient Persia, Egypt and Greece, was later reborn in the body of the human Jesus of Nazareth at the moment of his baptism in the Jordan.⁴² Steiner believed that, although unseen by many, the Christ-Being has remained on earth since his resurrection. He was convinced that a deepened and refined perception was necessary for more frequent experiences of the presence of Christ.⁴³

Perhaps it was Steiner’s belief that Christianity grew out of earlier religions that made him tolerate other world religions. He wanted Anthroposophy to embrace all people, regardless of their faith or cultural background. Even today, the Anthroposophical Society has only one condition for membership: the acceptance of its authority in the *Goetheanum* in Dornach.⁴⁴

Circumstances of and reasons for Ullmann’s path to Anthroposophy can be verified only to a certain extent, since related documentation is sparse. He left the Catholic faith in 1919, and became Protestant in 1925. Simultaneously, he was affiliated with the Freemasons and was drawn to oriental teachings. Clearly, from his twenties, Ullmann had been searching for “his” religion or *Weltanschauung*. Steiner’s tolerance towards other world views, religions, and cultures must have appeared inviting for Ullmann with his various interests.

⁴¹ Childs, Gilbert, *Rudolf Steiner: his Life and Work, An illustrated biography* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1996): 31.

⁴² Hemleben, *Steiner*, 102.

⁴³ Childs, *Rudolf Steiner*, 34.

⁴⁴ Website *Anthroposophische Gesellschaft*, Christian Peter, webmaster, <http://www.goetheanum.org> (accessed March 5, 2011).

Schultz suggests that Ullmann was particularly interested in the problem of dualism between the perception of self and the perception of the world. In anthroposophical thought, subject and object form a union within the reality of a superior spiritual world. As we will see later in the discussion of Albert Steffen's philosophy, one of the aims of Anthroposophy is the reconnection of the human spirit with the spiritual world where all-encompassing perception and consciousness take priority over being.⁴⁵

In his article *Ullmann als Anthroposoph* (Ullmann as Anthroposophist), Jan Dostal focuses on the elements of Anthroposophy that were possibly most interesting and attractive to Ullmann.⁴⁶ According to him, Ullmann's approach to Anthroposophy focused on its motivation to self-education and self-refinement within the context of reincarnation. He interprets the frequent appearances of the image of the *Doppelgänger* in Ullmann's diary *Der Fremde Passagier* as the summary of all impure qualities Ullmann felt present in himself. Dostal suggests that Ullmann strongly felt the responsibility for his state of knowledge, as addressed by Steiner in his *Philosophie der Freiheit*.

Naegele sees the beginning of Ullmann's interest in Anthroposophy in his fascination with Schönberg's unfinished oratorio *Die Jakobsleiter* (Jacob's Ladder).⁴⁷ The libretto, focusing on reincarnation as a central issue, was published by Universal Edition in 1917, and Ullmann was

⁴⁵ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 124-125.

⁴⁶ Jan Dostal, "Ullmann als Anthroposoph", in Klein, *Materialien*, 126-142.

⁴⁷ Schönberg, who wrote the libretto for his oratorio himself, wanted to demonstrate that men in this world are lost in materialism, and that they need God, religion, and prayer to find salvation. The first part of the oratorio describes the path of the souls toward the spiritual world, while the second part, of which Schönberg never completed the musical setting, illustrates the path back into the world. Naegele, *Ullmann*, 121.

enthusiastic about it after reading it twice.⁴⁸ He attended readings of the libretto in the Vienna *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* (Society for private musical performances) in 1921 and also in 1923 in the Prague chapter of the same society, perhaps initiating a renewed interest in some of its ideas. Reincarnation is also a focal point in the tragedy *Tantalos* by Felix Braun (1885-1973), which Ullmann used in the tenor solo of the third movement of his *Symphonische Phantasie* of 1924.

Ullmann visited the *Goetheanum* in Dornach in 1929 together with Hába, Erwin Schulhoff (1894-1942) and Karel Reiner (1910-1979). Already familiar with the idea of reincarnation, this visit very likely reinforced his genuine interest in Anthroposophy. While living in Zurich, he saw several performances of anthroposophical theatrical works, thereby exposing him directly to anthroposophical ideas.⁴⁹ At the same time, Ullmann also began to study the basic thoughts of Anthroposophy, specifically Steiner's *Philosophie der Freiheit* as well as his writings on music. Finally, in 1931, Hába helped Ullmann with a sponsoring letter to become a member of the society.

After Ullmann's acceptance into the Anthroposophical Society, he demonstrated great involvement and investment in the movement, giving up his musical career in order to own an anthroposophical bookstore in Stuttgart (1931-1933). It is possible, that during this time he encountered texts by Albert Steffen for the first time.⁵⁰

Naegele suggests that Ullmann used the years between his first departure from Prague (1928) until his return in 1933 for an internal re-orientation after several professional

⁴⁸ Ibid., 121; Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 63.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 122-123.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 127-128.

disappointments, such as his inability to find a reliable position, a publisher, and to make a formal break-through as composer.⁵¹ While his compositional output in this period came to a halt, particularly during his years in Stuttgart, Anthroposophy perhaps gave Ullmann new creative impulses. Once he was re-settled in Prague after the Stuttgart disaster, he began composing again and soon produced numerous successful works.

Besides musical compositions with an anthroposophical background, Ullmann's involvement with Anthroposophy found a direct literary reflection in his above mentioned *Der Fremde Passagier*. The diary contains 48 entries in rhymed verse, and 45 short statements in prose in its *Aphoristischer Anhang: Tagebuch in Prosa* (aphoristic addendum: diary in prose). In the diary, Ullmann makes frequent use of anthroposophic symbolism and refers, either in the poems or in their titles, to persons who were important to him, such as his father, Hölderlin, Steffen, and Steiner. He also uses musical terms in reflection of specific thoughts, such as the fugue with its different variations of its theme. Dostal interprets Ullmann's use of various images as an attempt to find different directions in his self-education.⁵²

Ullmann wrote several compositions with anthroposophical contexts. His opera, *Der Sturz des Antichrist*, based on a drama by Albert Steffen was the first artistic result of his engagement with Anthroposophy and won the *Emil-Hertzka-Preis* in 1936.⁵³ His *Steffen-Lieder* followed in 1937. The *Geistliche Lieder* (1939/1940) contain two settings of Steffen poems as well as a setting of Christian Morgenstern (1871-1914).⁵⁴

⁵¹ Naegele, *Ullmann*, 270.

⁵² Dostal, *Anthroposoph*, 127.

⁵³ Benetková, *Tagebuch*, 98; Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 148-149.

⁵⁴ Morgenstern was most famous for his nonsense poetry, his language being close to the linguistic experiments of the Avantgarde, particularly DADA. Philosophically however, he was strongly

Musical Ideals and Language

Ullmann's music philosophy and his musical language were shaped by both contemporary music as well as music from the past which he experienced through self-study, concerts in Vienna, and with his teachers and colleagues. According to Schultz, Ullmann's early works were influenced primarily by the music of Schönberg, Mahler, Mozart, and Bach. Ullmann specifically studied the solo piano works of Bach and Mozart during his early years in Vienna.⁵⁵ In some of his works, he pays tribute to Bach by using the B-A-C-H motif, as for example in the last movement of his fourth piano sonata and in his third string quartet.⁵⁶

Throughout his life, Ullmann showed avid interest in the music of his time, both as a listener and author of articles on modern music. In performances in Vienna around the turn of the century, he was exposed to classical and romantic repertoire as well as new works by composers such as Debussy, Mahler, Strauss, Franz Schreker (1878-1934), and composers of the Schönberg-School. During World War I, Ullmann had to abstain from concerts, but remained active in studying musical scores. Later on, in Prague and Zurich, he attended concerts and opera performances, keeping his musical knowledge current.

In addition to Ullmann's self-study, he received instruction in musical subjects, such as theory and composition, from Polnauer, Schönberg, Jalowetz, and Hába. They offered technical advice and inspiration, but considering how short the periods of instruction were, Ullmann ultimately formed his musical language alone.

influenced by Steiner. Heinrich Detering, ed. *Reclams grosses Buch der deutschen Gedichte: Vom Mittelalter bis ins 21. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2007), 921; Hemleben, Steiner, 103.

⁵⁵ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 19-20, 26, 66-67, 239.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 185, 198.

Ullmann's philosophy regarding the arts, and specifically music, has three principal foundations: he believed in the principle of *l'art pour l'art* (Art for Art's sake), he wanted to write music with a strong emotional content, and, in practical terms, he attempted to intertwine musical elements from both his past and present. The principle of *l'art pour l'art* was the guiding idea behind all of Ullmann's work. As he stated in 1918, in a letter to his girlfriend Anny Wottitz (1900-1945), the arts are free from functionality: "Aber sie (die Kunst) hat sich auch - wie die Erotik - gänzlich vom Zweckgedanken gelöst!"⁵⁷ (But it (the arts) has also freed itself completely - like eroticism - from any sense of functionality!) Additionally, he wanted clarity, simplicity, and economy of means to shape his work.⁵⁸

In his essay *Musik und Publikum* (1921), Ullmann discusses the gap between modern music and its audience in the concert hall. He emphasizes a strong difference between "enjoyable music", being popular but superficial, and art music, written from an "inner necessity" and requiring intellectual and emotional effort for understanding. According to Ullmann, music, in contrast to the other arts, adds an emotional component to cognitive processing. While the other arts are accessible for reason and cognition alone, music additionally creates an intense emotional experience for the audience.⁵⁹ Accordingly, Theodor Veidl, in his essay *Ullmann der Lineare* (Ullmann, the Linear), described Ullmann as *Temperamentmusiker* (musician of temperament) who wrote music without too much care for theory, but with much *Schwung und Feuer* (sweep and fire).⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 63.

⁵⁹ Viktor Ullmann, "Musik und Publikum", in *Der Auftakt* 1 (1921): 37-38.

⁶⁰ Theodor Veidl, "Ullmann der Lineare", in *Der Auftakt* 9 (1929): 78.

Practically, Ullmann aimed for his music to fill the space between music of the past and music of the present. In spite of his interest in music from various advocates of the Schönberg-School and other music to which he was exposed, he attempted to find a path to his own musical language rather than following in the footsteps of a specific school. He explains:

Es mag darum gehen, die unerschöpften Bereiche der tonal funktionellen Harmonik zu ergründen, oder die Kluft zwischen der romantischen und der >atonalen< Harmonik auszufüllen.⁶¹

(It may lead to either exploring the still unexhausted areas of functional harmony, or to bridge the gap between romantic and >atonal< harmony.)

However, Ullmann's musical ideals become most clear from his writings on the music of Berg, and perhaps it is Berg who had the strongest influence on Ullmann in terms of his musical philosophy. Already in his first article, *Alban Berg* (1930), Ullmann comments on both balance and blend of old and new musical elements in Berg's music, admiring his ability to merge atonality and tonality while simultaneously retaining characteristics of both.⁶² Much later, in Theresienstadt, Ullmann summarizes his thoughts on Berg:

Alban Berg heisst höchste Verantwortung gegenüber den Werten der älteren und den Errungenschaften der neueren Musik, heisst strenge Selbstdisziplin (!), Bewahrung der seit der und durch die Romantik in die Musik einflussenden Seelenwärme und Leidenschaftlichkeit, aber deren Ausgleich in polyphon-konstruktiver Arbeit, Gleichmass zwischen musikalischem Fühlen und Denken.⁶³

(Alban Berg means the highest responsibility towards the values of the older and the achievements of the newer music, means strict self-discipline, conservation of warmth of the soul and passion which since and through the Romantic have entered music, but also

⁶¹ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 144.

⁶² Viktor Ullmann, "Alban Berg", in *Der Anbruch* 12 (1930): 50-51.

⁶³ Ullmann, 'Sigmund Schul' in *26 Kritiken über musikalische Veranstaltungen in Theresienstadt*, ed. Ingo Schultz (Hamburg: Von Bockel, 1993): 90.

their counterbalancing in polyphone-structural work, balance between musical feeling and thought.)

Perhaps Ullmann followed Berg in the search of a bridge between atonality and tonality, but he found his own path by using elements from different compositional styles of his time and the past without advocating one school in particular.

Just as open and interested as Ullmann was in many cultural, religious, and philosophical aspects in everyday life, he was also open and interested in numerous musical elements from both his past and present. While trying to find a *Weltanschauung* that he could truly believe in, he was also trying to become his own self as a composer, with a personal and unique musical language. Sincerely and highly critical of his own work, he aimed at music that could stand on its own without breaking with tradition or creating something revolutionary: his aim was to explore his musical past more, and to find a connection between Romantic and Contemporary music.

Based on his musical experiences, education, and preferences, he chose particular intervals, such as the major third, fourth, tritone, major seventh, and utilized them both vertically and horizontally throughout his music. With these in mind, he searched for ways of combining elements from the past with elements from the present: while writing in mostly traditional genres and forms, he also tried alternatives, as in his songs for voice and string trio *Herbst* (Autumn, Trakl, 1943) and *Lieder der Tröstung* (Songs of Comfort, Steffen, 1943). Ullmann combined simple, folk-like melodies with harmonizations full of augmented and altered chords, and melodies using unconventional intervals, such as tritones and major sevenths, with more traditional harmonizations. While utilizing familiar cadences and progressions, he spiced them with variations and alterations such as tritone movements and augmented chords. Ullmann, musically influenced by many, grew throughout his lifetime into his own identity as a composer.

CHAPTER III

ULLMANN'S *LIEDER*: AN OVERVIEW

Works

While some might say the high point of the German *Lied* was in the second half of the 19th century, it also retained importance into the 20th century. The cultural and social milieu in Vienna at the turn of the century gave rise to a desire for new musical directions. Many composers used elements such as freer forms, new interval structure, extended harmony, and new vocal techniques, such as *Sprechstimme*, to illustrate poetry in different ways. Schönberg, Berg and Anton Webern (1883-1945), as the main contributors of the Second Viennese School, all wrote several *Lieder* cycles or groups of songs, of which Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* (1911) in particular impressed Ullmann deeply.⁶⁴ He was enthusiastic about the music, specifically appreciating its late romantic tone and formal structures.⁶⁵

The composition of the *Lied* in this period also continued with significant contributions from composers such as Zemlinsky, Franz Schreker, Erwin Schulhoff (1894-1942), Hanns Eisler (1898-1962), Ernst Krenek (1900-1991), and Kurt Weill (1900-1950). Ullmann knew some of these composers on a personal basis: Eisler from school days in Vienna and Schönberg's

⁶⁴ Naegele, *Ullmann*, 44.

⁶⁵ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 28, 234.

composition seminar, Schulhoff through his interest in Anthroposophy,⁶⁶ and Zemlinsky from his time in Prague. It is highly likely that he was acquainted with their *Lied* compositions.

While romantic poetry focused on themes such as nature, unrequited love, longing, dreams, death, *Wanderlust*, and mystery, poetry around the turn of the century was characterized by a sense of crisis, end of time, flight, and alienation from self and the world. Eroticism, especially in an attempt to break out from bourgeois conventions, also became an important issue. The composers who were searching for new musical directions, also added new poets to the Romantic canon in their *Lieder*, including, amongst many others, Richard Dehmel (1863-1920), Stefan George (1868-1933), Else Lasker-Schüler (1869-1945), Karl Kraus (1874-1936), and Georg Trakl (1887-1914).

It is within this cultural context that Ullmann, bringing with him an avid interest for literature and poetry, was naturally drawn to composing *Lieder* himself.⁶⁷ He set works by numerous poets, thereby demonstrating his wide knowledge of poetry. Early on, German Expressionist poetry most closely mirrored his feelings of longing, passion and search for his place in life in a world dominated by social, cultural and political change.⁶⁸ In letters written during his military service, he mentioned his intention to set several poems by Dehmel, Lasker-Schüler and Kraus.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Naegele, *Ullmann*, 35, 99; 201.

⁶⁷ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 27-28.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 33, 46-47.

As mentioned previously, all of Ullmann's early *Lieder* are now lost, their existence known only through contemporary reviews.⁷⁰ Ullmann's *Lieder* which did survive are settings of contemporary poets, such as Ricarda Huch (1864-1947), Albert Steffen (1884-1963) and Hans Günther Adler (1910-1988), as well as several older German poets, such as Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) and Novalis (1772-1801). He also set French poet Louise Labé (1524-1566), English poet Elizabeth Barrett-Browning (1806-1861), Persian poet Hafiz (14th century), and Swiss and Yiddish folk songs. As with his attitude towards religion, Ullmann was not confined to one specific poetic movement, but open to many different directions.

Ullmann's *Lied* compositions are close to the Romantic *Lied* in respect to form, themes and use of the accompaniment to set the scenes in preludes, interludes, and postludes, and his music generally supports the poetic idea. In the tradition of Mahler and Strauss, he also orchestrated some of his early songs.⁷¹

Musically, Ullmann's *Lieder* present a colorful blend of styles: there are passionate songs, such as the Huch and Labé settings, and also the dramatic Wedekind dialogue *Wendla im Garten* (Wendla in the Garden, 1943). Among more introverted settings are the *Geistliche Lieder* (Spiritual Songs) and the Steffen-*Lieder*. In the Hafiz-*Lieder*, Ullmann used elements of jazz. Adler's *Immer inmitten* (Always Within, 1943) is a solo cantata, of which only two out of the original four movements survived. In *Lieder der Tröstung* (Songs of Comfort, Albert Steffen, 1943) and *Herbst* (Autumn, Trakl, 1943), he investigated alternatives to the traditional *Lied* for voice and piano in settings for voice and string trio. Schultz suggests that Ullmann chose this

⁷⁰ The same is true also for other early works; Klein, *Materialien*, 11; Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 258-259.

⁷¹ Naegele, *Ullmann*, 144.

specific ensemble for a performance of the music by members of the *Fröhlich-Quartett*, who were also imprisoned in Theresienstadt.⁷²

Vocal Perspectives

Ullmann's deep love for the human voice is evident from the large number of his vocal compositions. However, he also saw limitations in the human voice which influenced the compositional style in his *Lieder*. With changing musical ideals in the beginning of the 20th century, new technical issues arose for singers. Ullmann recognized particular challenges regarding the intonation in lines that contained more unconventional leaps and were less grounded in a harmonically stable environment. Without being trained as a singer, Ullmann showed an innate ability to support singers musically, while recognizing particular qualities in individual voices.

In his 1929 article *Zur modernen Vokalmusik* (Regarding Modern Vocal Music), Ullmann compared new challenges of contemporary instrumental and vocal music. In his opinion, the combination of melodic lines containing unfamiliar intervals with an atonal harmonic context posed a major problem for singers:

Schon der Einzelsänger ist im begleiteten Satz vor das Problem gestellt, eine Linie, welche nicht mehr in das verwandte Tongeschlecht eingebettet ist, durchzuführen und rein zu erhalten; ausserdem kämpft er mit ungewohnten und grossen Melodieschritten.⁷³

(Even the solo singer in an accompanied setting experiences the difficulty of realizing a line outside of the context of the related tonality, and to keep it in tune; in addition, he deals with unfamiliar and large melodic steps.)

⁷² Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 195.

⁷³ Ullmann, "Zur Frage der modernen Vokalmusik", in *Der Auftakt* 9 (1929): 274.

In the same article, Ullmann recognized only minor developments in the auditive abilities of singers and emphasized the natural limits of the human voice:

. . . beim Sänger: vorzügliches Gehör wird heute zur unerlässlichen Forderung. Nun hat sich aber das Gehör der Sänger seit 100 Jahren nur ganz unwesentlich entwickelt und steht heute bestenfalls bei Wagners Chromatik. . . . Dass der Gesangsstimme in technischer Beziehung natürliche Grenzen gesetzt sind, bedarf keiner Betonung.⁷⁴

(. . . for the singer: today, an excellent ear is an essential demand. However, for the last 100 years, the ear of singers has developed only marginally, and now has arrived in the best case at Wagner's chromaticism. . . . That the voice encounters natural technical limits does not require emphasis.)

The picture emerging from the above excerpts regarding Ullmann's opinion of the voice and its capabilities is predominantly negative. However, his critiques of several concerts in Theresienstadt reveal more interest and empathy in an individual voice and musician. Outside the comparison of instrumental and vocal characteristics, Ullmann focuses on specific vocal qualities, both strengths and weaknesses, of each singer:

Berman's Stimme ist nicht sowohl sinnlich bezaubernd oder besonders gross, als tragend und mit Geschmack und Kultur beherrscht. Die tiefere Lage klingt durchaus sonor, das mezza voce der Mittellage ausgezeichnet, die Höhe ist noch nicht ganz angeglichen, aber entwicklungsfähig. Vor allem ist jeder Ton beseelt durch eine Musiker-Persönlichkeit.⁷⁵

(Berman's voice is not so much sensually enchanting or particularly big, but carrying and controlled by taste and culture. The lower register sounds quite sonorous, the mezza voce in the middle register excellent, the top is not yet fully even, but shows promise. Above all, each note is inspired by a musician's personality.)

⁷⁴ Ullmann, "Vokalmusik", 274.

⁷⁵ Ullmann, "Liederabend Karl Berman", in *26 Kritiken über musikalische Veranstaltungen in Theresienstadt*, ed. Ingo Schultz, *Verdrängte Musik*, vol.3 (Hamburg: Von Bockel, 1993): 68.

Here, Ullmann demonstrates both his understanding of technical issues, such as the development of registers, and his sensibility for the expressive character of the voice. Similarly, he critiques another singer:

. . . aber man fühlt: dies ist nicht der Platz des Sängers Königsgarten. Sein mezza voce ist beschattet, ist belegt und man hat, wenn man einige jener prächtigen Zufallstöne gehört und die wahre Stimme und ihren Charakter entdeckt hat, immer das Gefühl: warum singt er nicht drauf los, warum macht er keinen Gebrauch von seiner Stimme, die doch da ist, die immer dann kommt, wenn er vergisst, sich zu kontrollieren? Warum unterdrückt er asketisch, was doch, wo nicht geschult, doch gesunde Naturgabe ist und warum müht er sich, Liederchen zu singen, da er doch ganz gewiss ein Ariensänger ist, ja ein leicht dramatischer Tenor? Und man scheidet mit dem Wunsche: dass der Sänger zu sich selber und seiner in Wahrheit schönen Stimme komme.⁷⁶

(. . . but one feels: this is not the place of the singer Königsgarten. His mezza voce is shaded, is hoarse, and one always has the feeling, after hearing a few of these marvelous chance notes and recognizing the true voice and its character: why is he not singing out, why does he not use his voice that is there, that always comes out when he forgets to control himself? Why does he suppress ascetically what, though not schooled, is still a healthy, natural gift, and why does he attempt to sing little songs, while surely he must be an aria singer, yes, a light dramatic tenor? And one is left with the wish: that the singer may face himself and his naturally beautifully voice.)

Ullmann's *Lieder* show an awareness of both the possibilities and his perceived limitations of the human voice, while simultaneously challenging and stretching those possibilities. His vocal lines often contain unorthodox leaps, and while tonal centers are present, they often shift quickly or cadences take unexpected directions, requiring more independence from the singer. The singer depends on both an excellent ear and technical security to master many of the songs.

At the same time, Ullmann provides the singer a framework with a piano part that often doubles the vocal line, if not literally, at least in the harmony. Similarly, he balances the

⁷⁶ Viktor Ullmann, "Liederabend Fritz Königsgarten", in *26 Kritiken über musikalische Veranstaltungen in Theresienstadt*, ed. Ingo Schultz, *Verdrängte Musik*, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Von Bockel, 1993), 81-82.

challenges for the singer in his songs with his technique of combining simple elements on one level with more complex elements on another level. Rather than breaking with all traditions at once, creating completely new and unfamiliar music for specialist performers only, Ullmann explored selected compositional aspects of a song, while maintaining its approachability.

CHAPTER IV

SECHS LIEDER NACH GEDICHTEN VON ALBERT STEFFEN OP. 17

Albert Steffen

The poet, essayist, and painter Albert Steffen was born in Wynau, Switzerland in 1884. Growing up within a close-knit society of a rural location where his father was the village doctor, he observed illness, suffering and recovery, birth and death as natural elements of life. He was also familiar with a wide range of typically rural professions, such as miller, butcher, farmer, and weaver. Most of his childhood was spent outside: at the river, in the mountains, and in the gardens.⁷⁷ This closeness to nature, as well as his early insights into facets and stages of life, had a strong influence on his later *Weltanschauung*.

After early schooling in Wynau (1891-1895) and Langenthal (1895-1900), Steffen attended the *Literarisches Gymnasium* in Bern (1900-1904) before beginning medical studies at the University of Lausanne in 1904. However, he found the concentration of his studies on the physiological and anatomical aspects of life to be unfulfilling and lacking a spiritual focus. His desire to combine science, art, and religion in his profession, led to his wish to become a poet. In 1905, he moved to Zurich and began to study a wide array of subjects, including history, ethnology, philosophy, and economy, thereby reflecting his wide philosophical interests. His first novel “Ott, Alois und Werelsche” was published in 1907 in Berlin, where he was continuing his studies. That same year, Steffen heard his first presentation by Rudolf Steiner. He felt

⁷⁷ Heinz Matile, website *Steffen-Stiftung* “Zur Biographie von Albert Steffen”, <http://www.Albert-Steffen-Stiftung.ch/> (accessed November 4, 2010), 1.

immediately drawn to Steiner's teachings and became a member of the *Theosophische Gesellschaft* in Munich in 1910.

After many years in Munich during which Steffen wrote and published several novels and dramas (but achieving no position with a reliable income), he made Dornach, Switzerland, his permanent residence until his death in 1963. In Dornach, the location of the *Goetheanum*, the center of the now *Allgemeine Anthroposophische Gesellschaft*, he became the chief editor of the society's weekly journal, *Das Goetheanum* in 1921. Two years later, in 1923, he became the associate chair of the society, as well as the chair of the department for *Schöne Wissenschaften* at the school there. Finally, after Steiner's death in 1925, he followed him as chair of the society. Steffen's aim as chair of the society was to guide the society through his art rather than through direct use of power, which resulted in criticism for weak leadership.⁷⁸ However, he believed in a society in which its members act freely and without constraints by an external power, and through his style of leadership, he attempted to bring this idea to life.

In addition to his work for the society as chair, editor, and teacher, Steffen continued to write until his death. He believed that the poet's mission was to create the foundation for a new world having overcome evil, and his poetry aimed at this spiritual goal rather than at worldly success. His work includes novels, dramas, poetry, and smaller genres such as memories and myths.⁷⁹ He expressed his political views specifically in the dramas: on National Socialism in *Der Sturz des Antichrist* (1928, The Fall of the Anti-Christ), which was set by Viktor Ullmann in the opera of the same name, on the war and the Red Cross in *Die Märtyrer* (1942, The Martyrs),

⁷⁸ Ibid., 4-7.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 5.

and on the issue of euthanasia in *Ruf am Abgrund* (1943, Call on the Rim). Shortly before his death, he even published sets of prints and watercolors.⁸⁰

As Fritz Strich (1882-1963) explains in his *Albert Steffen: Rede zur Feier seines 70. Geburtstages gehalten in St. Gallen*, Steffen searched for the nature and purpose of Man in his poetry.⁸¹ He felt that humankind had lost the sense of true value and spirituality in life in the attempt to accumulate material riches and powers, observing consequences such as internal emptiness, rawness and brutality between human beings.⁸² Steffen believed in the eternal wisdom and truth of Man's spirit and that the reconnection of Man with his spirit was the essential purpose of life. His aim as poet was to guide humankind back to a path towards higher spiritual realization and fulfillment.⁸³ In his view, this reconnection could only be reached through reincarnation, as the span of one lifetime could not suffice to reach spiritual fulfillment. In the process of reincarnation, Man's spirit after death first restores its perfection through catharsis, to then be reborn into new life on a spiritually higher level.⁸⁴ For Steffen, death is therefore a positive and freeing power rather than a frightening demon.⁸⁵ *Geistgestalten* in Steffen's

⁸⁰ Website *Steffen-Stiftung*, "Lebenslauf", <http://www.steffen-stiftung.ch/> (accessed August 9, 2010).

⁸¹ Fritz Strich, *Albert Steffen: Rede zur Feier seines 70. Geburtstages gehalten in St. Gallen* (St. Gallen: Eirene, 1955), 6-7.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 7-10.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

Weltanschauung and poetry are spiritual entities, which function as bridges between death and birth, helping and advising humankind.⁸⁶ Steffen saw salvation in the return to nature.⁸⁷

The belief in the need for reconnection with the inner spirit, the ability to gain more insight into the spiritual world, the presence of the eternal spirit between death and rebirth, and reincarnation are all major anthroposophical ideas. However, while Steiner spread his ideas in numerous conferences and seminars all over Europe, therefore perhaps remaining somewhat removed from Man's everyday life, Steffen wanted to bring Steiner's thoughts directly to men. He had observed their reality, sometimes in its darkest aspects,⁸⁸ and attempted to guide them back onto a path towards nature and simplicity in order to reconnect with the spiritual world.

It was in the mid 1930s that the worlds of Ullmann and Steffen began to intersect. Ullmann began composing music to Steffen's works in 1935 with the opera, *Der Sturz des Antichrist*. Steffen, though without much enthusiasm, commented positively on Ullmann's opera: "Die Musik aus dem Ganzen u. Vollen, gekonnt, beherrscht die Extreme u. doch ist das Melos das Siegende."⁸⁹ (The music with full and rich gestures, skillful, controlling the extremes, and yet, Melos is the victor.)

⁸⁶ Ibid., 17.

⁸⁷ Friedrich Hiebel, *Albert Steffen: Die Dichtung als Schöne Wissenschaft* (Bern: Francke, 1960), 18.

⁸⁸ While living in Berlin, Steffen had rented a room in a dark and poor area of the city. From there, he was able to observe various aspects of the life of proletarians, their actions and their behavior. He experienced the situation as the presence of darkness and thus longed for a renewed spiritual light in the world. Matile, *Steffen*, 2.

⁸⁹ Schultz, *Leben und Werk*, 158.

Sechs Lieder nach Gedichten von Albert Steffen, Op. 17

In 1937, shortly before his mental breakdown, Ullmann composed a set of six songs using poetry by Steffen, one of the first works he published himself. He dedicated the set to his second wife with the words, “Meiner lieben Frau Annie zum 6. Mai 1937” (To my dear wife Annie, May 6, 1937). The *Lieder* were premiered in Prague in 1937.⁹⁰ He selected the poems out of order from two collections of Steffen’s poems: *Drei Blumen* (Three flowers) and *Dreierlei Schutzgeister* (Three sorts of guardian spirits) were published in the collection *Gedichte* (Poems) in 1931, while the other four poems are part of the collection *Wegzehrung* (Provisions), first published in 1935.⁹¹ Without providing a narrative, the poems present several elements of Steffen’s philosophy, particularly his love of nature, yearning for a spiritually centered life, the reality of *Geistgestalten* between death and rebirth, and his humor. The poems speak in a quiet and internal tone without external passion. In all six poems, Steffen deals in different ways with the tension between heaven and earth, shifting the focus from more earth-bound poems to poems, which anticipate heavenly existence/ redemption/ salvation.

Ullmann’s settings focus on the illustration of the connection between heaven and earth as expressed in the poetry, primarily the misery of earthly life and the prospect of spiritual reconnection and renewal in death. The interpretative analysis of the songs will show how Ullmann’s music reflects the internalized mood of Steffen’s poems, responding to changes from desperation to hope and from humor to earnestness. His set, with some exceptions, presents a sense of unity through coloration and mood, and the music speaks with a quiet, simple tone without virtuoso effects. As was Ullmann’s musical ideal, he combined musical tradition and

⁹⁰ Ibid., 256; Schott, *Complete Songs*, 15.

⁹¹ Albert Steffen, *Gedichte* (Dornach: Verlag für Schöne Wissenschaften, 1931); Albert Steffen, *Wegzehrung* (Dornach: Verlag für Schöne Wissenschaften, 1935).

modern tendencies in his music by utilizing many of his preferred modern musical elements, particularly in terms of harmony and melodic structure, in otherwise traditional settings. In all of these songs, Ullmann uses familiar form schemata, such as varied strophic, through-composed, binary, and ternary form. He often creates unity within a song by an arch-like re-utilization of a musical phrase or theme from the beginning of a song at the end.

While Ullmann utilizes both traditional and modern musical elements as natural parts of his language, he goes further in using them specifically to highlight the primary tension between earthly darkness and heavenly promise. Familiar musical elements often portray experiences in earthly life, while contemporary elements frequently symbolize heaven.

The songs are set within a medium range for both voice and piano, only occasionally exploring extended registers. In the vocal line, Ullmann utilizes somewhat unconventional intervals to reflect the imagery in the poem, particularly tritones and minor and major sevenths. The piano writing is not excessively challenging in a technical sense. It puts more stress on coloration and voicing than virtuoso playing. Ullmann employs chordal, linear, and occasionally polyphonic textures in the piano, and often doubles the vocal line, which makes balancing and voicing an important issue for the pianist. The amount of doubling Ullmann uses between voice and piano suggests a step back in the development of the *Lied*, as both parts had, in general, achieved a great level of independence throughout the 19th century. However, the doubling stems primarily from Ullmann's belief that vocal lines consisting of many unfamiliar intervals provide too many challenges for singers in terms of intonation. In making the specific motives a main element of the piano part, also in the left hand without the voice, his attempt to provide support for the vocal line remains quite subtle. Ullmann's piano parts are not subordinate to the voice, but play a vital role in creating the poetic image in the music.

Harmonically, Ullmann utilizes many traditional, tonal musical elements and contrasts or combines them with elements from contemporary or recent musical developments. He frequently uses segments of whole-tone scales. He contrasts simple triads with newer chord structures such as augmented chords, and alters seventh-ninth chords with diminished fifths, augmented fifths, or other added intervals. In his cycles of falling fifths, he often includes at least one tritone movement in the bass rather than a fifth, or harmonizes perfect fifths with augmented chords. He resolves other harmonic progressions, while creating anticipations for specific resolutions based on tonal cadences, in unexpected and surprising ways. Ullmann shows a fine sense for prosody in all six songs: musical and word stresses usually fall together rhythmically and are often emphasized by additional accents through dynamic, pitch or duration. He varies both melody and rhythm according to the poetry and always accomplishes an atmosphere that is supportive of the text. He does, however, depart from a “correct” prosodic setting in order to accentuate the meaning of the text in his music.

The Steffen-*Lieder* contain many examples of musical illustration of the poetry. Ullmann’s text painting through melody, harmony, and rhythm, is both general and specific: he creates an appropriate atmosphere and coloration for each poem, but also depicts individual images, such as the flight of birds or the stinging of bees.

The following analysis focuses on the most characteristic elements of each song. The interpretations of the anthroposophical poetry attempt but do not claim a profound understanding of poetry in terms of its specific anthroposophical symbolism. This can, perhaps, only be illuminated fully with deeper and more specific study of the anthroposophical *Weltanschauung*.

The interpretations within this study aim to give performers sufficient guidance for a successful performance of this set.⁹²

An Himmelfahrt

An Himmelfahrt (At Ascension), the first poem set, is full of exultation about the miracle of creation and the descent of the Holy Spirit to earth at Pentecost; it is a celebration of life. The poem marvels at nature's awakening in spring time, recognizing the presence of the Holy Spirit in nature. Steffen lifts up nature by attributing her a soul, the Holy Spirit, and the ability to adore Christ, hoping that men will return to nature as a way to improve their lives.

Ullmann's music mirrors the poem's joyful message. It is a light and cheerful waltz in varied ternary form with a folk-like character. The vocal line in general stays within a medium range, and Ullmann utilizes only short melismas to emphasize the waltz rhythm. The piano accompanies the vocal melody either with chords or with scales in thirds while doubling the vocal line.

Two motivic elements dominate the song: a simple, folk-like melody, and a scale pattern. In the first motif, the melody is contained within the fifth A-E, creating a tonal center of A (mm. 5-12). With only few and small leaps from a minor second to a fourth, primarily as passing notes, this melody retains a linear, folk-like character, pointing to the earthly setting of the song. The melody is prepared in the prelude and appears in all three parts of the song, including the postlude, thus providing an arch across the song as well as connecting its parts. (See Figure 1).

⁹² Similarly, the interpretation of the music remains subjective and presents only the author's personal opinion. Without direct statements of the composer himself, there is no way to know how Ullmann intended to illustrate the poetry with his music. However, as artists, we form and shape an interpretation on the foundation of research to find possible solutions, which might at the very least provide a starting point for further discussion.

Sehr leicht und zart (♩. ca. 46)

An Him - mel -

6

- fahrt im Vo - gel - bau der Ei - er zart a - zur - nes

Figure 1. *An Himmelfahrt*, mm. 1-11. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

The folk character of this melody becomes even stronger with the recognition of Ullmann’s citation of the famous German folk song *Kuckuck, Kuckuck, ruft’s aus dem Wald* (Cuckoo, cuckoo, it calls from the woods). In the first half of the melody, the only addition to the original melody is a pick-up and the note B as a passing note; he then departs quite significantly from the folksong.⁹³

The second motivic element is a falling scale pattern consisting mostly of whole-tones and illustrating the flying and swinging movement of young birds. It is also introduced in the

⁹³ Ullmann has used musical citations and musical symbolism (both letters and numbers) also in other works, particularly during his time in Theresienstadt. Naegele, *Ullmann*, 424-425.

prelude (m. 2) and becomes dominant in the second verse (mm. 13-28). Here it is part of the vocal line, but particularly present in the piano part. (See Figure 2).

The image shows a musical score for the song 'An Himmelfahrt' from Ullmann's 'SÄMTLICHE LIEDER'. The score covers measures 12 to 15. The vocal line is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are 'Blau. An Pfing - - sten - schon zum Flu - - ge -'. The piano accompaniment is complex, featuring parallel ninths and augmented chords. The tempo/mood is marked 'bewegter' and the dynamics include 'f' (forte).

Figure 2. *An Himmelfahrt*, mm. 12-15. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

The first verse remains simple regarding its texture. The piano part doubles the vocal line, but Ullmann adds dissonance to the melody with parallel ninths and augmented chords as well as alternating major triads, minor triads, and seventh chords in the piano part. Taking away some of the tonal grounding of the melody points to the outlook to heaven on the occasion of Ascension.

The second verse is appropriately more active in its depiction of birds’ flight, both parts sharing the scale pattern. In the middle of the verse, Ullmann uses a tremolo in the piano, literally illustrating the fluttering of the birds’ wings (mm. 22, 27). This is the only place in the set where he uses this device, perhaps demonstrating that, while he has strong preferences for certain musical elements, he does not feel confined to use these only. (See Figure 3).

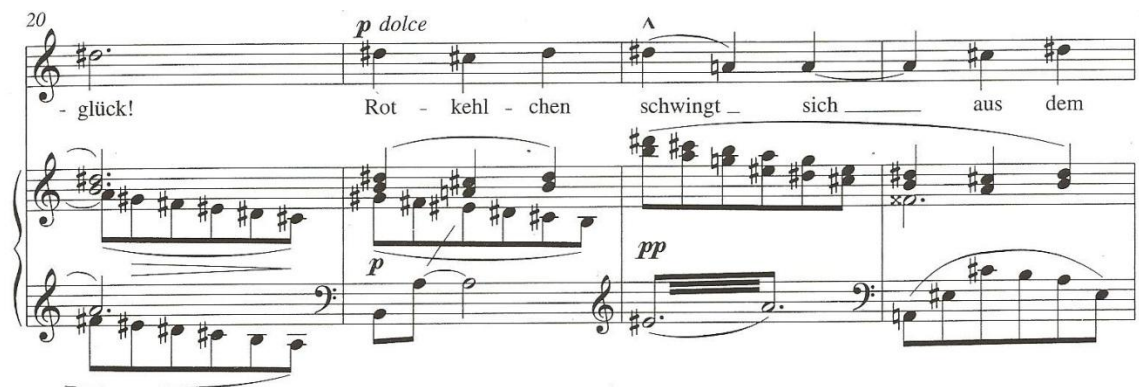


Figure 3. *An Himmelfahrt*, m. 20-23. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

Ullmann’s text setting in general follows the prosody with a regular rhythmical phrase structure largely within the rising and falling of a 3/4 meter. Most of the melodic phrases are two measures long and begin with a pick-up, leading into the climax on the downbeat and then falling throughout the next measure. However, he adapts his phrasing in several places in order to follow the inflection. In the second verse for example, beginning in measure 21, he begins the phrase on the downbeat rather than with a pick-up to provide a strong beat on the first syllable of the word *Rotkehlchen* (robin). The melisma over the first two beats of measure 22 on *schwingt* (soars) is regular, but Ullmann adds a tie on *sich* (the German transitive verb *schwingt sich* can literally be translated as “swings itself”, mm. 22-23), creating a hemiola pattern, in order to move the next strong word *Nest* (nest, m. 24) to a strong downbeat. The hemiola also results in a strong sweeping character of the line, illustrating the flying robin.

In the third verse, Ullmann again utilizes the original melody in the voice with a similar harmonization in the upper part of the piano, while the bass continues with the flowing eighth notes from the second verse. On the melisma on the word *Geist* (Spirit, m. 30), he makes another change from the rhythmically regular pattern in order to serve two purposes: the emphasis of the

significance of the Holy Spirit through the duration of the melisma, and correct prosody to secure the arrival of the stressed second syllable of *Natur* (nature, m.32) on a strong downbeat.

In the last line of the vocal melody (mm. 33-43), Ullmann chooses several traditional musical elements to achieve a sense of expansion: high range in the vocal line against a strong and low bass, longer durations, melismas, and hemiolas all combine to create a sense of the greatness and immensity of God's creation. The vocal line rises with a tritone up to the high A, the highest note of the song, while the rolled chords in the piano cover two or almost three octaves. At the same time, the melodic rhythm in the vocal line is stretched out with pitch changes only once or twice per measure and with melismas on the words *preist* (praises) and *Kreatur* (creature). Hemiolas substitute a majestically striding rhythm for the dancing waltz rhythm. While familiar elements earlier had pointed to an earthly setting, they now accentuate God's kingdom. (See Figure 4).

32 *ff*
- tur! Chri - stos, dich preist

36
die Kre - a -

Wie zu Anfang
40 *f sempre*
- tur!

pp *poco espr.*

Figure 4. *An Himmelfahrt*, mm. 32-43. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

Simultaneously though, Ullmann’s variation on a cycle of falling fifths, beginning and ending the cycle with a tritone in the bass, exemplifies how he intertwines a traditional chord progression with his liking of tritones (mm. 33-37, see Fig. 4). He uses the cycle, perhaps, as a symbol of the old tonal tradition, illustrating the old belief that all creatures on earth are given by

God and adore Him, while his addition of tritones as a symbol of new tendencies refers to the actuality of the same thought. With these musical elements, Ullmann creates an augmentation on several layers in honor and adoration of God's greatness.

In the postlude, Ullmann draws once more on the melodic motif of the beginning, first in the original form (mm. 40-43), and then as a partial echo. Within the echo, the repeated F# in the middle part is reminiscent of church bells ringing in the celebration of the Holy Spirit descending to earth at Pentecost. Although Ullmann uses different cadences at the ends of his songs, he often uses a simple chordal ending (with the exception of the last song), calming the music as if in a last exhalation. (See Figure 5).



Figure 5. *An Himmelfahrt*, mm. 44-49. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

Considering that most of the songs deal with deeply spiritual issues, his endings perhaps convey a final affirmation similar to an “Amen”. Both the reference to church bells and the Amen show that Ullmann's openness to different world views and faiths is also reflected in his music, simultaneously using traditional Christian symbols and anthroposophical poetry.

Drei Blumen

The second song, *Drei Blumen*, describes the spirit's journey on earth through different levels of desperation and hope, as Steffen saw it necessary for the restoration of truth and peace. In each verse, an objective narrator describes a new stage of this journey characterized by three flowers, *Uchtblume*, *Iris* and *Isisträne*. On a second level of symbolism, two divine and sacred characters, the ancient messenger goddess Iris and the Christian saint Maria (Mary), illustrate the element of hope.

Ullmann carefully follows the journey of the spirit in his music. Minor and major modes, rhythm and tempo help to illustrate anxiety and doubt, as well as hope and optimism. The song is through-composed with three clearly delineated verses, each closely connected by a single four-note motif which combines two major seconds and one minor second. (See Figure 6).



Figure 6. *Drei Blumen*, mm. 1-4. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

The harmonic transformations this motif undergoes throughout the song illustrate the changing levels of spiritual hope expressed in the poetry. The song evolves from dark G# minor

through G flat major and A flat major to the consoling B major, the relative major key to G# minor, before ending again in G# minor.

The slow first verse is set in the darkness and coldness of the world, symbolized by the *Uchtblume*, a common, beautiful, but poisonous European flower.⁹⁴ Ullmann presents the original motif in G# minor (m.2). He uses mostly minor and augmented chords in its harmonization, with the exception of the major V-I progression on the last word of the line *Tote* (the dead, m.4). Already in the very beginning, his play with major and minor points to the tension between earthly misery and heavenly promise. (See. Fig. 6).

While the melody is primarily linear with only minor leaps, a few wider and less familiar intervals protrude: the major seventh towards the word *Leid* (suffering, m. 6) emphasizes the contradictory element in the juxtaposition of spring and suffering. Similarly, the change in register conveys the suffering in earthly life with a different timbre in the voice. The doubling between voice and piano, of which there is a lot in many other parts of the song, is less pronounced, separating the parts and emphasizing the individual loneliness of men during earthly life. Accents, vertical structure and tenuto lines in the piano at the end of the first verse accentuate a surprisingly declamatory character. By addressing winter and snow directly in contrast to more descriptive narration, this is possibly the most personal moment in the poem, the deepest point of suffering.

The first verse is separated from the second verse with a rest (mm. 1, 11), the pivot point of the decision between remaining in darkness and danger and finding the courage to initiate change. Steffen, following Steiner's teachings of man's responsibility for himself, wanted to

⁹⁴ D. Johann Georg Krünitz, "Uchtblume", in *Oekonomische Enzyklopädie oder allgemeines System der Staats- Stadts- Haus- und Landwirthschaft*, available from <http://www.kruenitz1.uni-trier.de/> (accessed Nov 24, 2010); idem, "Zeitlose".

leave the decision of whether and how to live a spiritually guided life to men themselves, and Ullmann depicts this thought by musically leaving space for thought. With the last chord of the verse, a D flat seventh-nine chord with augmented fifth which is already the dominant to the G flat major of the second verse, Ullmann creates strong harmonic anticipation and expectation at the same time he stops all movement in the rest.

He illustrates rising hopes in the second verse, symbolized by the *Iris*, with the transposition of the principal motif to G flat major. The *Iris* is a flower that blooms in the spring, the time of growth and change. Iris is also the ancient messenger goddess returning to earth on a rainbow, and her presence demonstrates divine empathy with men and the first glimpse of hope. Faster tempo and later fluently moving eighth notes contribute to a more optimistic outlook. The upper two parts of the piano and the voice circle like a pendulum within a rising and falling G flat major seventh chord over the bass. The movement symbolizes Iris' flight to earth and with her the arrival of hope. In the imitations of voice and piano part (mm. 14-18), the sequence of new entrances pushes the music further forward. Like the first verse, the second verse also ends with a more declamatory vocal line with quarter-notes and many leaps (m.18-21), such as fourths, tritone and the outline of a minor seventh chord. Ullmann reaches on the last chord the dominant to the following A flat major.

In the third verse, Steffen uses a healing plant, the *verbena officinalis* (in central Europe called *Taubenlieb* or *Eisenkraut*),⁹⁵ to illustrate the healing of the spirit. Known as *Isisträne* in Ancient Egypt, the plant was sacred and used for ceremonies in the temple. The sight of this plant comforts Maria who anticipates heaven from earth, representing humankind.

⁹⁵ "Eisenkraut", available from <http://www.heilkraeuter.de/lexikon/eisenkr.htm/> (accessed Jan 16, 2011).

The principal motif appears here in transposition to A flat major (m. 22) over another section of flowing eighth notes. Ullmann again inserts a declamatory section with wider leaps (m. 28) before entering a measure of profound modulation (m. 30) which then leads to the final two presentations of the principal motif (m. 31, 33). The modulation perhaps prepares the inner transformation from the previous objective statements on the history of the *Isisträne* to the personal consolation at the outlook to heaven. In the modulation, Ullmann divides the natural minor scale according to the rhythmic structure of the principal motif, combining it with the only traditional, unaltered cycle of falling fifths in the entire set. This fact in combination with his use of equally traditional V-I cadences at crucial points, such as between verses, perhaps points to the confinement of men to the familiar: life on earth.

For the last line of the poetry, Ullmann slows down the tempo. The principal motif returns with the original rhythm in B major, the relative major key to the original G# minor. In 1935, Ullmann had written an article called “Zur Charakteristik der Tonarten“ (Regarding the Character of Keys) on the basis of the *Farbenlehre* (Theory of Colors) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). In it, he describes B major as the key of the *Verklärung des nun scheidenden Lichts* (transfiguration of the now ceasing light).⁹⁶ With the consoling B major, Ullmann reaches the most hopeful and optimistic point in his music. Even though the spiritual transformation in death is not yet reached, Ullmann gives musical assurance of the fulfilling experience-to-be of the transformation.

Under the appearance of the motif in B major with the suspension C#, Ullmann uses open fourths and fifths (m. 31, second beat). Both the suspension in the melody and the emptiness of the harmonization reveal a hesitation to trust the possibility of salvation in spite of the hope illustrated by the key of B major. The motif then appears in the upper parts of the piano alone in

⁹⁶ Viktor Ullmann, “Zur Charakteristik der Tonarten”, in *Der Anbruch* 17 (1935), 244-246.

F# major (m. 33). However, Ullmann musically leads the listener back to the desperation and loneliness of the world. He shifts in the melody chromatically from major to minor (E# to E natural, mm. 33-34), to finally arrive in the original G# minor on the last chord. After the B major section, particularly after the bright C# major seventh, the final G# minor perhaps illustrates the realization of men to still be part of despair and darkness of the physical world. Ullmann achieves a desolate sense of closure at the end of the song by arching across the whole song, reusing both the beginning cadence and the beginning motif in reverse order. (See Figure 7).

Figure 7. *Drei Blumen*, mm. 34-36. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

Dreierlei Schutzgeister

Dreierlei Schutzgeister, the third song, stands in strongest contrast to the other five songs as the only one of this set with a light and humorous character. The song fits well into the tradition of the German Romantic *Lied* with its fantastic characters, varied strophic form, and detailed text setting. Particularly in terms of harmony, intervals used and the relationship between vocal line and piano part, the music clearly speaks Ullmann's language.

In the poem, a narrator describes the actions of three pairs of guardian spirits, the cheerful flutists, Pilinko and Tilinko, a pair of poodles, Usake and Busake, and helping angels, Aumru and Kaumru. Steffen points here to his aforementioned idea of the *Geistgestalt*: these spiritual entities, in this case the guardian spirits, are the connection between the spiritual world and the physical reality, helpful and protective of mankind. The poem focuses on the fantastic and humorous aspects of the spirits rather than on men's serious need for support from the other side in a life of struggle.

Ullmann sets the three verses of the poem in varied strophic form. The first two verses are closely related in terms of musical material and scherzo character, while the third verse, which is also different in the poem, brings a calmer and softer aspect to the song.

The prelude, with its nine bars the longest in the whole set, prepares the scene for the song, already containing many elements that bring out the humorous character of playing, dancing, and bouncing gnomes. The beginning motif, the main melodic motif of both the first and second verse, consists of accented and disjoint staccato eighth notes (m. 1-3). The first interval in the top line of the piano writing is a tritone, leading to an augmented chord in m. 2, both elements dominating the first two verses. The following four measures center on the note D, approaching it in diminishing leaps of an augmented fifth, perfect fifth and tritone. The hemiola (mm. 6-7) helps to intensify the tension in this interval sequence, cumulating on a dominant seven-nine chord with

augmented fifth, enharmonically notated as minor sixth (m. 8). The chord resolves in a seventh chord in G major, and an eighth note group leads to the voice entrance. (See Figure 8).

Lebhaft, mit Laune (♩. ca. 56)

The musical score is for a piece titled "Lebhaft, mit Laune" with a tempo of approximately 56 beats per minute. It is in 3/4 time. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 1-5) shows a piano introduction with staccato chords and a melodic line in the right hand. The second system (measures 6-10) includes a voice entrance with the lyrics "Pi - lin - ko,". The piano accompaniment continues with various dynamics including *mf*, *p*, *f*, *sfz*, and *mf*.

Figure 8. *Dreierlei Schutzgeister*, mm. 1-10. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

Staccato, accents, melodic leaps, and rhythm, particularly the hemiola, all contribute to the scherzo character of the song and demonstrate a new side of Ullmann’s personality, namely his sense of humor. Frequent augmented chords and chords built from perfect fourths, fifths and tritones give the prelude an unsettled character while utilizing many of Ullmann’s preferred melodic and harmonic elements.

The first motif of the prelude (mm. 1-3) becomes the main melody of the song with the entrance of the voice (m. 10), although Ullmann makes several adjustments for the purpose of prosody, such as adding an additional measure to set the second spirit’s name (m. 11) and a phrase ending with transition to the second half of the melody (m. 13). While the prelude has an

irregular phrase structure (3+2+4), highlighting the fantastic element in the poetry, the vocal melody is evenly divided into two four-bar phrases, matching the regular poetry.

Ullmann maintains the humorous character of the song in many ways. The disjoint character of the melody depicts the dancing and darting of the gnomes, most clearly at the words *Riesen überlisten* (outwit giants, mm. 16-17), where the melody consists of a sequence of five different intervals in different directions: falling a major third and a tritone, rising a fourth, falling a minor third and a major third. (See Figure 9).

15

im-mer-froh, Rie - sen ü - ber - li - sten. U - sa - ke,

kräftig

mf *p* *f marc.*

mf stacc.

Figure 9. *Dreierlei Schutzgeister*, mm. 15-18. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

At two transitional points, Ullmann chooses to change the key of a scale mid-way, pointing to the unpredictable and surprising nature of these spirits. First, he gives the scale in the middle of m. 13 that begins in C# a brief whole-tone character by changing G# into G natural. At the end of the verse, Ullmann arrives at a pure E major chord through a chromatic modulation (B flat major-B major) and a V-I cadence (B major-E major). However, the scale leading into the second verse also turns whole-tone midway, immediately taking away the effect of the harmonic resolution (m. 17, see Figure 9).

The second verse, with the original melody set a half-step lower than in the first verse, is heavier in character. More dense chords in a lower range in the piano writing (mm. 22-24), stronger dynamic and a short legato line (m. 19) give an impression of strength and weight in contrast to the lean flexibility of the first verse. The darker coloring is consistent with Steffen's use of vowels in the names of the gnomes: while the words "Pilinko" and "Tilinko" contain the light and bright "i" on the strong syllable, the words "Usake" and "Busake" have the darker "u" in that position. At the end of the verse (mm. 24-25), the falling chromatic line in the voice leads to a rising augmented chord, accompanied by a series of augmented chords in the piano. Here, Ullmann uses major thirds both horizontally and vertically to depict the *böse Dämonenschar* (evil herd of demons). Particularly on the word *böse* (evil, m. 24), Ullmann simultaneously utilizes accent, duration and the dissonant dominant seven-nine chord with augmented fourth, to emphasize the mean character of the demons. The seven-nine chord contains both an augmented chord F-A-C# and layers of whole-tones, two of Ullmann's preferred compositional elements. Ullmann changes the occasional accent in the vocal line in the first verse and the directive *sehr munter* (very cheerful) to more frequent vertical accents and *kräftig* (strong) in the second verse, shifting the emphasis from the guardian spirits to their opponents.

Since the change in persona and character between the first two verses and the last verse is substantial, Ullmann takes more time to transition into the third verse. An imperfect whole-tone scale leads to alternating notes F and G flat (mm. 25-29), a motif derived from the middle voice of the prelude (m. 4). The third verse, in a slightly calmer tempo, contains longer notes, fewer rests and very little staccato, and is overall more lyrical than the first two verses. Ullmann first combines the cycle of falling fifths with augmented seventh chords on the strong beats (mm. 30-33). (See Figure 10).

Figure 10. *Dreierlei Schutzgeister*, mm. 27-36. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

After the falling first four bars, the vocal line rises with a short melisma on some of the leaps to emphasize *Traum* (dream, m. 35 and 39), *Mängel* (faults, m.37), and specifically the repeat of the word *Ruh* (peace) which is the longest melisma of the cycle, with six dotted half-notes (m. 40-45). In the piano part, there is still a rhythmically active staccato motif, derived once again from measure 4 of the prelude and bringing back the element of humor in this more lyrical section of the song. It begins with the repeat of the words *trotz aller Mängel* (despite all our faults), first in a hemiola but less strong than in the prelude, and leads to “Ruh”. Then, while the calming music portrays us as the narrators sinking deeper into our dreams, it accompanies the same word, the light staccato in the piano depicting the angels’ reluctant retreat (mm. 38- 45).

The pianissimo accents on the motif in the piano part (m. 45) illustrate the last resistance of the spirits before giving in. (See Figure 11).

37

Män - gel, gebt uns im Traum Ruh,

p

pp

p stacc. poco marc.

pp stacc. poco marc.

42

ruhig

trotz

pp stacc.

poco espr.

Figure 11. *Dreierlei Schutzgeister*, mm. 37-46. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

In the last phrase, the piano part harmonizes the vocal melody and leads with the melody softly to the end.

In this song, Ullmann underlies an overall traditional song setting with his own unique approach. He makes frequent use of various forms of seventh chords and augmented chords mixed with major triads and chords built from fourths, which are all elements of his

compositional style. He constantly doubles the vocal line in the piano, providing much support to the singer in a song full of unfamiliar and disjointed leaps with many directional changes, responding to his distrust of singers' abilities to cope with challenges in contemporary music. Perhaps Ullmann's more demonstrative use of contemporary elements, although still in a traditional setting, points to his attempt to find an appropriate musical illustration of the anthroposophic idea of *Geistgestalten*, elements of a contemporary and not yet widespread philosophical idea.

Es schleppt mein Schuh

Dramatically, the fourth song, *Es schleppt mein Schuh ...* (My shoe trudges), is the lowest point within the cycle. It is a *Wanderer* song full of desperation in the great Romantic tradition, although not without hope in the end. Ullmann creates an almost visible image of someone struggling through ice and snow until he finds relief in death. The song is through-composed, like a single great rise in tension until the climax with a musically completely changed coda beginning in the moment of release and salvation.

Steffen's use of the first person strengthens the imagery of the poem, causing us to identify with the *Wanderer*. Ice and snow symbolize both coldness and a lack of empathy between men which, according to Steffen, dominate reality in the world. Nothing on earth, not even passion, in this case symbolized by a hot tear, can change the course of the world, and the body must die in order to go through transformation. However, in the moment of death, the *Geist-Titan*, the Spirit, reveals himself, and his presence reinforces the hope in death as a positive force.

Both melodically and rhythmically, Ullmann uses traditional elements to accentuate the earthly burden of the *Wanderer*. While the other five songs in the cycle, with all their differences, were mainly driven by their melodic structure, dotted rhythms are the most defining element in

this song, illustrating the struggling of the wanderer. Short motivic phrases cover only four beats, beginning with a pick-up and ending on a quarter-note on the third beat of each measure. (See Figure 12).

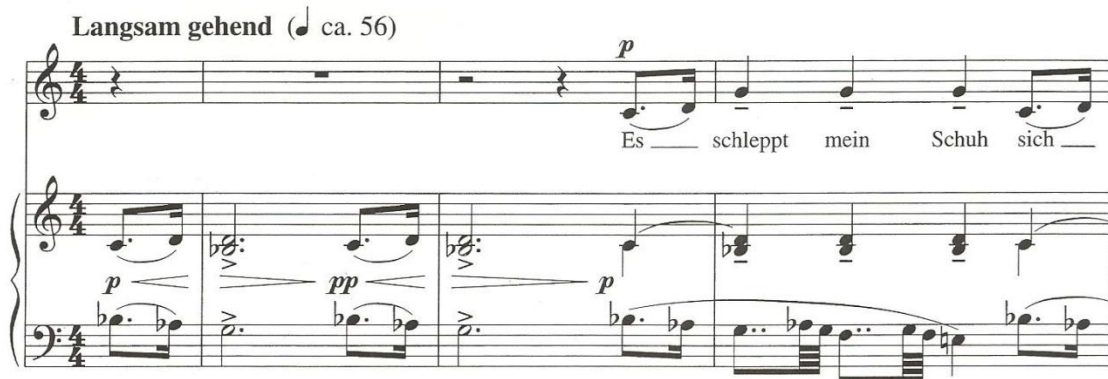


Figure 12. *Es schleppt mein Schuh*, mm. 1-3. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

The rhythmic pattern demonstrates in a steady, mechanical way the stumbling of the *Wanderer* and ends only at the moment of the appearance of the *Geist-Titan* (m. 14), the moment of release.

If the rhythmic motif illustrates the walking and physical struggle of the *Wanderer*, the melodic motif, following the rhythmic structure, points to his inner life and struggle. Ullmann depicts the growing desperation of the *Wanderer* in the vocal line with widening intervals between pick-up and downbeat from fifth (m. 2-3) to major seventh on the word *Träne* (tear, m. 6/7).⁹⁷ At this point, chromatically falling lines (mm. 7ff) intensify the feeling of pain and loneliness.

⁹⁷ The sixteenth note D is an unstressed passing note only; we hear the intervallic tension more strongly between the dotted eighth and the downbeat.

After using several almost common elements to depict the lone *Wanderer*, Ullmann continues with further traditional elements to illustrate the three most defining moments of death and release: the freezing of the body (m. 10), the body's fall (m. 11), and the appearance of the *Geist-Titan* (m. 14). First, the music rests on a fermata on the word *Eis* (ice, m.10). The fermata illustrates the impossibility of movement in a frozen body. As a consequence, the body falls, which Ullmann accentuates literally with a fall of a fourth F-C parallel in voice and piano (m. 11). (See Figure 13).

Figure 13. *Es schleppt mein Schuh*, mm.10-12. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

Finally, after the last chromatic phrases at the highest range of the song, all tension releases into a pure E-flat major triad at the appearance of the *Geist-Titan* (mm. 12-14). In the piano writing, Ullmann shifts to two four-part chords with a grace note octave underneath, covering a wide range and achieving a very rich and full sound, while the voice spells out the triad, illustrating the majestic character of the moment. Here, both parts end in a fermata on the word *inhält* (pauses, m. 14). Struggle and also angst end, and hope and salvation become apparent. (See Figure 14).



Figure 14. *Es schleppt mein Schuh*, mm. 13-15. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

As the first half of this song is strongly set in the familiar desolation on earth, Ullmann’s choice to use chromaticism as a primary musical element accentuates the familiarity of the experience. Perhaps he chose the E flat major (m.14) without any alterations for the same reason.

The last six measures of the song represent a complete change of mood. Ullmann replaces the dotted rhythm with a combination of quarter-notes and fluid, flexible triplets. The first three phrases are four beats long, as they were in the beginning, connecting the coda with the rest of the song. After the repeated quarters in the beginning of the song, which later turn into intense chromatic lines, the leaps in the coda have a more relaxed effect. It could be said that Ullmann aims to illustrate the overcoming of earthly struggles and the realization of death as a welcoming power. The triplets in the accompaniment embellish the vocal line, taking away the strict and impersonal character from the dotted rhythm of the beginning. In the last three measures, Ullmann slows down the rhythm dramatically to half notes in an already slow song and drops in range in both parts. Although not void of dissonance in the chordal piano writing, the pure D minor chord (m. 19), and the final IV-I cadence retain the peaceful character to the end. Ullmann musically paints the moment of death. It may be said that in this song, Ullmann uses

familiar elements to illustrate both the familiar, life on earth, and the unfamiliar, but comforting: heavenly hope and promise.

Wie ist die Nacht

In the fifth song, *Wie ist die Nacht...* (How soft is the night), the poet describes the farewell of two lovers, one of which is at the threshold of death. The lovers' conversation however, lacks mutual reaction, one of the main characteristics of a dialogue. In the first part of the poem, only one of the lovers speaks, while in the second part of the poem they each describe their experiences. Their non-communication indicates that the two lovers already belong to two different stages of life.

While the poem itself is continuous rather than showing an organization into verses, Ullmann structures his song into seven verses. The song is also divided into two parts at roughly the mid-point (m. 28). Ullmann's music focuses on the aspect of acceptance in the poem: the song has a flowing character and is, in general, very even in illustrating an inescapable process. Only occasionally, specifically in the fifth verse, the music becomes more dramatic in terms of intervallic structure, dynamic, range, and chordal setting in the piano. Ullmann, in general, uses a lower range and more dense texture for the first half of the song, in which the first, earthbound lover describes his emotions. In the second half of the song, the range goes up slightly, and the texture spreads out more, illustrating the outlook to heaven of both lovers.

Ullmann uses only one fluid melodic motif for both personas, perhaps depicting the unifying love between the lovers rather than their separation. This motif, with all its later alterations, could be said to depict the connection between earth and heaven, symbolizing the unstoppable and necessary process from one to the other.

In the first verse, Ullmann sets the scene with the central melodic motif. He begins the melody with a pick-up in the vocal line alone. The augmented second Ullmann uses for the pick-up directly points to a song with a strange and wonderful character. He uses the second as the dominating interval in the melody, creating an appropriately intimate character: in the first phrase, minor and major seconds in a stepwise rising sequence reach the climax B flat and then fall again in reverse motion to D (m. 1-4). The second phrase begins like the first, but frees itself in the second half from the sequencing in order to arrive, after a modulation, on B flat (m. 5-8). The aspect of freeing oneself from the burdens of life in order to reach a new spiritual stage is an important issue for Steffen, as we have already seen in *Drei Blumen*, and Ullmann reflects this thought in his music. He supports the linear and legato character of the melody with the choral-like piano writing, doubling the vocal line in the same register. The piano bass leads most distinctly in contrasting motion to the melody, cadencing to the phrase endings. (See Figure 15).

Ruhig (♩ ca. 76)

„Wie — ist die Nacht so weich und warm, wie sind die See — len

Figure 15. *Wie ist die Nacht*, m. 1-4. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

From the second verse onward, eighth notes almost continuously move through the song. Ullmann matches Steffen’s view of dying as an irreversible process and a continuation from earthly life into heavenly after-life. The melodic motif from the beginning, with only small

changes, is divided between the vocal part (m. 9-12) and the piano part (m. 13-15). Eighth note figurations, such as the thirds in the left hand of the piano (m. 9 ff) and the canon-like imitations between voice and piano help the forward motion of the lines.

This melodic motif returns with small changes also in the fourth verse and the sixth verse, and functions as a unifying element in the song, always emanating a calm and accepting mood. The third verse, the fifth verse, and the seventh verse are rather different in character, and they are therefore discussed separately. In the fourth verse (mm. 25-32), the melody gains more urgency. Ullmann transposes the original melody into the realm of G major, which is a significant shift from its original appearance in E flat major. Once again, in his article *Zur Charakteristik der Tonarten*, Ullmann states his opinion that E flat major, although the key of “the fighting hero”, still belongs to the darker keys. G major, however, embodies a brighter and more cheerful color.⁹⁸ While the element of fight is not present in the music in the beginning of this song, its darkness and softness appropriately illustrate the night atmosphere. At the moment one of the lovers realizes the distance the other has reached already, Ullmann turns to the lighter G major, indicating how he, like Steffen, believes that death is a natural part of the life cycle rather than a dark force. In the second half of the verse, the second lover speaks for the first time and, from this point onward, both lovers alternate. The melody here rises higher without the typical fall towards the end of the line, depicting the rise of the second lover’s soul towards heaven (m. 29-32). In this phrase, Ullmann also uses many tritones between the vocal line and the piano bass as suspensions on the first and third beats of the measure, which resolve into thirds (m. 29-30). The tritone suspensions and the syncopations in the middle parts of the piano writing musically propel the second lover’s soul further along on her path to heaven.

⁹⁸ Ullmann, *Tonarten*, 245.

In the sixth verse (mm. 41-48), when the melody returns, the first half is almost an exact repetition of its appearance in the beginning of the second verse, while the second half has a rising tendency. The piano part intensifies with three sequences arriving at a widespread G major seventh-nine chord (m. 48). In addition, Ullmann uses dynamic and agogic devices, such as a crescendo and a stringendo, to accentuate the woman's increasing excitement at her view of heaven.

While the melodic motif undergoes the discussed alterations throughout the song, three verses differ more distinctly from the original in either Ullmann's use of musical elements or in mood. The third verse (mm. 17-24) has a questioning nature, with the first lover searching for the reason for his beloved's death. While keeping the flowing and linear character, Ullmann changes the key to the even darker E flat minor. New intervals become important: the vocal line covers a falling tritone B flat - E twice before reaching the end of the first phrase (mm. 17-20). The simple stepwise suspensions from the original melody widen to thirds, diminished and perfect fourths, and minor sixths, emphasizing the directional changes and making the melody less settled (mm. 21-22). The augmented chord in the vocal line, F – A - C# (m. 23), accentuates the rare and extraordinary sacredness of the second lover. Chromatic lines in the accompaniment add to the questioning character.

In the dramatic climax of the song in the fifth verse, Ullmann increases the tension on multiple levels (mm. 33-40). Up to this point the dynamic of the song is contained between piano and pianissimo; now, in only four measures, Ullmann reaches a forte (m. 37) that he additionally supports with a much thicker texture and wider range in the piano writing, as well as almost sweeping vocal lines that make use of wider intervals, directional changes and a higher range. He builds the music from the melody in the bass (m. 33). Beginning on the word *erwacht* (awakening, m. 35-36), the melody in its original form shifts into the tenor line with the bass in

parallel sixths (m. 36). The appearance of the original melody together with Ullmann's rare instruction *das Thema hervorheben* (bring out the theme, m. 36) emphasize the radiance of the after-life in all its majesty as well as the depth of the couple's love. (See Figure 15).

Simultaneously, the right hand of the piano, while doubling the vocal line, grows into four-part chords (m. 36). The vocal line is related to the original melody, but Ullmann adds much wider intervals in the beginning of the phrase, such as a tenth and an octave (m. 32-33). The climax at the words *Geliebter, ach, ich bin* (Beloved, ah, I am, m. 36-37) consists of a group of major thirds, building two intertwined falling augmented chords from the high G (m. 37) as an extension of the falling major triad two measures earlier (m. 35). (See Figure 16).

30 je - nes Land, wo dei - ne See - le wohnt.“_ „O wie der wun - der -

34 - sa - me Glanz ge - wal - ti - ger er - wacht!“ „Ge - lieb - ter, ach, ich

38 bin so ganz in dei - ner Lie - bes - macht.“ „Nun - hebst du dich zum

Dynamic markings: *pp*, *p*, *f*, *ritard.*, *a tempo*.
 Performance instructions: *espr.*, *das Thema hervorheben!*

Figure 16. *Wie ist die Nacht*, mm. 34-41. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

The change in intervallic structure in this verse and the strength of the piano part point to the crucial changing moment for the lovers: the first lover is overwhelmed by the experience of *der wundersame Glanz* (the wondrous radiance) causing his passionate outbreak from the otherwise contained character in the song. He finds contentment and awe in the transformation of death after his earlier doubts in the third verse. The second lover, on the other hand, seems to

begin to realize the opposite, namely that her reaching her destination means to leave earthly love behind. The double-sidedness that appears again in the last verse of the song is already apparent in this passionate climax.

The original melody is most altered in the seventh verse (mm. 49-56). In the first phrase, two falling minor sixths, D-F#, substitute for the stepwise motion from the original motif, accenting the word *fliegst* (you are flying) and shifting the melodic climax into the first measure of the motif. In the second phrase, the last statement of the second lover, Ullmann begins with the original melody, then uses wider intervals, such as tritones and fifths, arriving at the high G (m. 55), which he had reached only twice before in the song (m. 37, 38). Ullmann's use of wider intervals in this last verse again indicates the double-sidedness of emotions: while the first lover has experienced moments of doubt rather than pure acceptance of death in the fifth verse, he now feels exhilaration at the thought of his beloved reaching her destination. On the other hand, while the second lover previously aspired to the heavenly transformation, she now also feels regret at leaving her earthly love behind.

Finally, through a cadence based on several intensely altered chords (mm. 55-56), using somewhat distant secondary dominants, seventh-nine chords, and chords with diminished fifths and sixths, Ullmann reaches the pure E flat major triad at the very end of the song. He combines a traditional cadence (V)-V-I with his preferred harmonically advanced altered chords, juxtaposing alteration and purity. Ullmann's use of mostly whole-tones in measure 56 can be said to demonstrate a release from familiar tonality in the moment of the second lover's death, the loss of a tangible connection to any key in the moment of her rise to heaven. His reaching E flat major through an altered V-I cadence shifts the focus back to the first lover left on earth. Ullmann portrays the loss of physical connection between the lovers, one of them having risen to heaven,

the other, illustrated by the final return to the original key of E flat major, still tied to the world. (See Figure 17).

54

ritard. molto *pp* *ritard.*

e - wig gern, ach viel, ach viel zu sehr."

p *pp* *ppp*

Figure 17. *Wie ist die Nacht*, mm. 54-57. From "Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*". Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

Aus dem Häuschen in den Garten

The last song from the set, *Aus dem Häuschen in den Garten* ... (From the little house into the garden), is a depiction of the moment of death. Although the poem seems to be based on a simple and nature-loving poem, Ullmann's music strongly conveys a deeper meaning of the poetry. He portrays the fleeting memories and events of life passing through the mind in the moment of death. In the music, the poetry is not anchored in life anymore, describing life from a distance.

The memories recall the experience of eating an apple while avoiding an attack by wasps, then sharing the various parts of the apple with the crow in order to avoid its curse and with the fish to delight them. Steffen portrays both the wasps, although sometimes a nuisance, and the more pleasant fish as accepted parts of nature, while the black crow, set traditionally as the negative character of the poem, has the ability to curse people. This is the only expression of

superstition in this set of poems; however, coming from a poet who attempts to guide poetry back to the basic needs of real people, a folk-like idea such as this strengthens his aim.

From the beginning, Ullmann's music brings out a deeper and less folk-like aspect than the poetry might suggest at first sight. He keeps a floating, objective atmosphere that gives the music a less earthy and more ethereal atmosphere. The memories in Ullmann's musical interpretation refer to moments of a life lived, while being already removed from life itself. The song is varied strophic with two verses, and each verse has two parts in itself: one more melodious, the other more lively and active. The whole song breathes a detached and disembodied atmosphere.

In the first part of the first verse (mm. 1-8), the piano part provides the background for the narrative with quarter-notes in the left hand and syncopated quarter-notes in the right hand, creating a composite rhythm of continuous eighth notes. The cluster-like chords Ullmann uses in the right hand are layers of three small intervals, mostly seconds and thirds, of which only the highest note can be clearly distinguished. Small changes within these chords are barely noticeable unless they happen in the top voice. There is little shape and direction within these chords, creating a vague and intangible mood. As the left hand material grows fuller from a single note to a four-note chord (m. 8), the falling bass line has the most distinct shape in the piano part. (See Figure 18).

Gemächlich (♩ ca. 80)

Aus dem Häuschen in den Gar - ten zu dem Ap-felbaum,

pp mit Pedal

5
denn du kennst die gu - ten Ar - ten, *pp* rot mit blau - em Flaum,

Figure 18. *Aus dem Häuschen in den Garten*, mm. 1-8. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

The vocal line is embedded in the piano writing, moving syllabically and with many changes in direction, but not at first being doubled by the piano. Ullmann follows the prosody to the extent that he keeps the stress/no stress organization within a word: stressed syllables always appear on stressed beats of the music. He does not for the most part, however, set the important words on the strong beats within a measure (particularly downbeats), but rather uses smaller words in these places, such as articles and prepositions. Strong words appear on the melodic climaxes of the phrases, frequently in the middle or the end of the measure rather than on the downbeat. For example, in the first phrase, the prepositions and conjunctions *aus* (from), *zu* (to), and *denn* (for) occupy the downbeats, and the nouns *Häuschen* (little house) and *Apfelbaum*

(apple-tree) are set on the second and third beats of the measure (mm. 2-6), each on the melodic climax of the phrase. (See Fig. 17). Melodic accents thus oppose rhythmic accents, negating the accent all together and, in combination with the almost formless piano part, create a floating character. Ullmann deliberately chooses this setting, achieving a detached mood, as is appropriate at the pivot between life and death.⁹⁹ The same treatment of the text is present throughout the song. Seconds, thirds, and fourths are the dominant intervals in the vocal line in this section, and the line, although melodious, also retains a speech-like character.

In the second section of the first verse (m. 9-17), the vocal line continues in this style with a similar interval structure, while the piano part is altered considerably, becoming more active and lively. Instead of the soft and mellow syncopations, Ullmann adds more motivic elements into the piano part, many of which are also illustrative of the text. The piano first steps out of its preceding background character by doubling the major thirds of the vocal line (m. 9). Here, and in the following measures, Ullmann uses many augmented chords and chords built from fourths and tritones, typical elements of his compositional style. Their open, empty character perhaps illustrates the uncertainty at the moment of death, not knowing exactly where the spirit goes after leaving its physical existence behind.

After the more indistinct character of the first part of this verse, the second part contains many specific elements illustrating the memories. Beginning in the piano part, both the staccato and the following repeated eighth notes with grace note depict the sudden buzzing and stinging of the wasps (mm. 10-14), as does the dotted rhythm, first in the vocal line then in the piano part (mm. 13-14). Wider leaps in the vocal line with directional and intervallic changes depict wasps, swarming and searching before flying away with a last angry buzz in the form of a grace note (m.

⁹⁹ By re-arranging the text to incorporate upbeat, Ullmann could have easily made adjustments for a better prosodic setting as he did several times in *An Himmelfahrt*.

15-16). The piano part in this section is not only color, but it participates actively in the musical illustration of the poem. (See Figure 19).



Figure 19. *Aus dem Häuschen in den Garten*, mm. 9-11. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

A brief piano interlude connects the two verses in this song, using the previous dotted rhythmic pattern, as well as a short melodic motif with an intervallic structure similar to the vocal line. Ullmann’s recapitulation of musical material from earlier within the song is a depiction of memories of life passing through the mind (m. 16-17).

Although the vocal part is almost identical to the first verse apart from the few changes necessary to accommodate different numbers of syllables, Ullmann again makes several changes in the piano writing. After one measure of syncopations in the left hand as transition, the piano part takes over the melody itself, transposed down a fifth and accompanied by syncopations in the right hand. Similar chords to those from the first verse are accentuated by a reversed dotted rhythm (short - long rather than long - short). The continuation of the dotted rhythms throughout the song creates a sense of unity. With the entrance of the voice, piano and voice play with the melody in imitation (m. 18-26). The first appearance of the melody in the piano part perhaps symbolizes the mere feeling of memories, before they are focused into words.

Ullmann does not musically depict the crow and her threat in great detail apart from one grace note on the word *Kräh* ' (crow, m. 22). While one might argue that he missed the opportunity for contrast in a song that, in its varied strophic setting, contains many similar and repeated elements, he emphasizes the aspect of being removed from threat and fear.

The second section of the second verse (mm. 27-34) uses one new and one familiar rhythmic pattern to illustrate the movement of the fish in the water. The triplet, a traditional rhythmic water motif, shows the fish swimming in the waves. Ullmann only hints at the triplet pattern (m. 27, 32), making the connection with the past, without overemphasizing a traditional musical element. By merely suggesting the movement, he depicts an ephemeral memory rather than a real experience. He simultaneously uses the familiar dotted rhythm: in the piano part over falling scales from the whole-tone milieu (m. 28-32) and in the vocal part within a line that is otherwise similar to the beginning melody in terms of its intervallic structure. Ullmann's increasing use of whole-tone material in the end with decreasing harmonic tension and need for resolution points to Steffen's welcoming of death as a positive force, leaving earthly struggles behind.

There is only one moment in the whole song where Ullmann changes his rhythmic and melodic treatment of the vocal line. In measures 26-28, he employs an upbeat on conjunction and article, and he sets the noun *Fischlein* (little fish) on the melodic climax on the downbeat. As a result, this short phrase has a more lyrical, sung, and somewhat sweeping character. Ullmann uses a familiar B flat major seventh-ninth chord, linear in the vocal line and as a chord in the piano part, as a moment of clarity among the many clusters in the song, the most cheerful and positive memory. (See Figure 20).



Figure 20. *Aus dem Häuschen in den Garten*, mm. 26-29. From “Ullmann *SÄMTLICHE LIEDER*”. Used with kind permission of European American Music Distributors LLC, sole U.S. and Canada agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG.

The postlude leads with the whole-tone scale motif and dotted rhythms to the end of the song. Again, Ullmann utilizes augmented chords (m. 35), and he also contrasts, in the bass, the perfect fourth (m. 35) with the tritone (m. 36). In the last four measures of the song, the phrases become shorter and softer like an echo over a bass that pauses on a D flat minor chord with added sixth and seventh. The last chord is built on a fifth, while containing a whole-tone cluster.

Ullmann creates an impression of a life gone without a definite description of its new abode. The music remains open.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Ullmann was intimately familiar with the ideas and thoughts of Anthroposophy, a *Weltanschauung* which had given him the spiritual space and freedom he needed. In his *Steffen-Lieder*, he not only composed a beautiful set within the realm of his musical language, but he also used the essential elements of his language to illustrate the particular tendencies apparent in the poetry.

In general, Ullmann used the element of the familiar to illustrate the familiar, such as the earthly life, earthly burdens and sufferings. In contrast, he used more modern and contemporary elements to depict unfamiliar and uncertain processes and consequences. The combination and intertwinement of both shows the deep connection of the physical, familiar world and the super-sensual, spiritual world. It is also his own way to integrate elements from his musical past and present in his language. Ullmann achieves a consistency within his style by following many of his ideas he had laid out over years in articles such as *Zur Frage der modernen Vokalmusik*, his articles on Alban Berg, and his Theresienstadt critiques.

Interestingly, while his style in general remains consistent in the *Steffen-Lieder*, he sometimes uses the same compositional devices to illustrate opposite poetic intentions. Perhaps Ullmann's dislike of being put under specific expectations was so strong, that he purposefully contradicted himself to remain free.

In most of the songs of this set, both spiritual and physical realities, or heaven and earth, are present. Often, the tension between the two is strong. In terms of interval choices, he frequently employs less familiar intervals, such as tritones and major sevenths, in order to illustrate the burdens of the physical reality. They can all appear either vertical or horizontal. As the discussion of the songs demonstrated, he uses tritones in *Es schleppt mein Schuh ...*, on every beat when the wanderer realizes the presence of the *Geist-Titan*. Similarly, he utilizes the major seventh to help the emphasis of the words. In the beginning of *Drei Blumen*, the major seventh illustrates the discrepancy between springtime and suffering. However, his use of tritones in *Dreierlei Schutzgeister* has quite the opposite effect. Here, tritones are abundant although they indicate the super-sensual, spiritual character of the song rather than earthly heaviness.

Another element of Ullmann's intervallic language is the whole-tone scale. In the second verse of *An Himmelfahrt*, he uses whole-tone scales to depict birds' flights, less grounded on earth and more free. At the very end of *Wie ist die Nacht ...*, he uses whole-tones both horizontal and vertical to represent the release from earthly context of one lover in contrast to the tonal framework depicting the first lover who remains in the physical world.

Ullmann's vocabulary in terms of chordal structures includes major, minor, and augmented triads as well as altered chords with diminished fifths, augmented fifths, ninths, and elevenths. He often combines a simple melody, such as in *An Himmelfahrt*, with a harmonization full of these intervals to point to the spiritual context of Ascension. In contrast, he combines the varying forms of triads in the harmonization of the principal melody in *Drei Blumen* more to accentuate the darkness on earth.

Ullmann's alters the cycles of falling fifths in the *Steffen-Lieder* by dispersing the bass movement particularly at the beginning and end of the progressions with tritones, as demonstrated in *An Himmelfahrt* in reference to the presence of Christ in nature. He also harmonizes this type

of progression with augmented seventh chords, as seen in *Dreierlei Schutzgeister*. However, he also uses the traditional form of the cycle of falling fifths to illustrate consolation and hope in *Drei Blumen*.

Without the contrast of tonality and the lack thereof, Ullmann also at times illustrates the void of physical context in the poetry, such as in *Aus dem Häuschen in den Garten ...*, with a tonal void: indistinguishable and shapeless clusters in the piano writing portray death as a moment outside of time and direction.

In his *Steffen-Lieder*, Ullmann demonstrates his diverse musical language as it had evolved from his acceptance and tolerance of differing musical styles and his dislike of external expectations. While all specific musical elements are grounded in his language rather than showing a direct anthroposophical relation, he uses his language with all his freedom as a composer to clearly and in great detail illustrate the poetry. Just like Steffen's words, Ullmann's music points to the tension between Heaven and Earth.

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APPENDIX A:
POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS

An Himmelfahrt

An Himmelfahrt
im Vogelbau
der Eier zart
azurnes Blau.

An Pfingsten schon
zum Fluge flügg.
O Zwitscherton!
O Sommerglück!

Rotkehlchen schwingt
sich aus dem Nest.
Sein Seelchen singt
purpurnes Fest.

O Heiliger Geist
in der Natur!
Christos, dich preist
die Kreatur!

Drei Blumen

Uchtblume blüht im Herbst,
zeitlos für Tote.
Frucht bringt im Frühling
Leid blossgelegter,
schamerfüllter Seele.
Weh, verschwinde,
Schnee, verhülle.

Iris ist dem Mond entwichen,
Und auf einem Regenbogen
auf die Welt hinabgeflogen.
Ihre Farben, fast erblichen,
siebenfach im Blaugewand,
weisen auf ihr Heimatland.

Isisträne, blaue Blume,
im Ägypterland bekannt,

At Ascension

At Ascension,
In the birds-nest
the azure blue
Of the delicate eggs.

At Whitsun,
already fledged for flight.
O the chirping!
O summer happiness!

The robin redbreast
soars from the nest.
Its little soul sings
a crimson celebration.

O Holy Spirit
in Nature!
Christ, all creation
praises thee!

Three flowers

Autumn crocus blooms in autumn,
Timeless for the dead.
Fruit in spring brings
Unconcealed suffering,
filling the soul with shame.
Alas, disappear,
Snow, cover it over.

Iris has escaped from the moon
and flown down to the world
on a rainbow.
Its almost blanched colors,
sevenfold in their blue apparel,
point to its homeland.

Isis'-tears, blue flower
known in Egypt,

Taubenlieb, auf deutscher Krume
nach Maria so genannt,
Augentrost der heiligen Fraue,
Himmelsblick auf irdischer Aue.

verbena on German soil,
so called after Mary,
eye bright of the Holy Virgin,
a glimpse of heaven on earthly pastures.

Dreierlei Schutzgeister

Three sorts of guardian spirits

Pilinko, Tilinko,
fröhliche Flautisten,
kluge Gnomen, immerfroh,
Riesen überlisten.

Pilinko, Tilinko,
merry flautists,
clever gnomes, ever gay,
outwit giants.

Usake, Busake,
bellendes Pudelpaar,
wehre dich,
packe böse Dämonenschar.

May Usake, Busake,
pair of barking poodles,
protect you and drive away
the horde of evil demons.

Aumru und Kaumru,
helfende Engel,
gebt uns im Traum Ruh,
trotz aller Mängel.

Aumru and Kaumru,
ministering angels,
despite all our faults
give us peace in dream.

Es schleppt mein Schuh

My shoe trudges

Es schleppt mein Schuh
sich schwer im Schnee.
jedoch ich geh,
geh immerzu.

My shoe trudges
heavily in the snow,
but on I tread,
and keep moving on.

Die Träne heiss
erweicht nicht
die harte Schicht:
sie friert zu Eis

My hot tears
do not soften
the hard layer:
they freeze into ice.

Der Körper fällt.
Gerade Bahn
der Geist- Titan
doch innehält.

The body falls.
But the Titan spirit
merely pauses
in its straight path.

Wie wird mir wohl!
Ein Gotteskeim
grünt insgeheim
am kalten Pol.

All will be well with me!
A divine seed
is secretly thriving
at the icy pole.

Wie ist die Nacht

“Wie ist die Nacht so weich und warm,
wie sind die Seelen nah,

wie du so ruhst in meinem Arm,
Bist du schon nicht mehr da,

ich sehe dich am Himmelsdom
von Stern zu Sternen ziehn,

ein bläulich schimmerndes Phantom,
willst du die Liebe fliehn,

hinwandeln mit geschlossnem Lid,
du Geisterkolonist,

bist du der dunklen Erde müd,
weil du so heilig bist?

Du hast dich weit von mir gewandt.
jetzt trittst Du in den Mond-”

“Ich geh nur in jenes Land,
wo deine Seele wohnt.”

“O wie der wundersame Glanz
gewaltiger erwacht!”

“Geliebter, ach, ich bin so ganz
in deiner Liebesmacht.”

“Nun hebst du dich zum hehrsten Raum,
wie bist du still und blass.”

“Es trennt mich noch ein schmaler Saum
vom seligsten Gelass.”

“Du fliegst, du fliegst, du bist so fern
Ich sehe dich nicht mehr.”

“Ich habe dich für ewig gern,
ach viel, ach viel zu sehr.”

How soft is the night

“How soft and warm is the night,
how near are the souls;

as you rest so in my arms
you are already no longer there.

I see you in the dome of heaven
moving from star to star,

a bluish shimmering phantom.
do you want to flee from love,

to wander with closed eyes,
you colonist of spirits?

are you weary of the dark earth
because you are so holy?

You have turned away far from me.
Now you appear in the moon.”

“ I walk only in that land
where dwells your soul.”

“O how the wondrous radiance
awakens more brightly!”

“Beloved, ah, I am so entirely
in the power of your love.”

“Now you rise to the loftiest sphere,
how silent and pale you are.”

“A slender margin still separates me
from the most blessed space.”

“You are fleeing, you are so far away,
I shall see you no more.”

“I shall forever be much, ah,
much too much fond of you.”

Aus dem Häuschen in den Garten

Aus dem Häuschen in den Garten
zu dem Apfelbaum,
denn du kennst die guten Arten,
rot mit blauem Flaum,
bis zum Bach verfolgt von Wespen,
beisse nicht hinein,
erst im Schatten dieser Espen
lassen sie uns sein.

Schau, dort auf dem Wipfelne
jene schwarze Kräh,
schenk ihr schnell die Schalenreste,
dass sie uns nicht schmä, und die Fischlein in den Wellen
locke mit dem Kern,
O die sonnigen Forellen,
O die nehmens gern!

From the little house into the garden

From the little house into the garden
as far as the apple-tree -
for you know the good kinds,
red with purple bloom -
wasps will pursue you to the brook;
do not bite into it;
only in the shade of these aspens
will they leave us alone.

See that black crow
there on the tree-top nest.
Quickly, give it the rest of the peel
so that it does not revile us,
and entice the little fish in the water
with the core.
O sunny trout,
Who gladly take it!¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Adrian and Lionel Salter, transl. Booklet in *Viktor Ullmann: Lieder* (Munich: Orfeo, 1995).